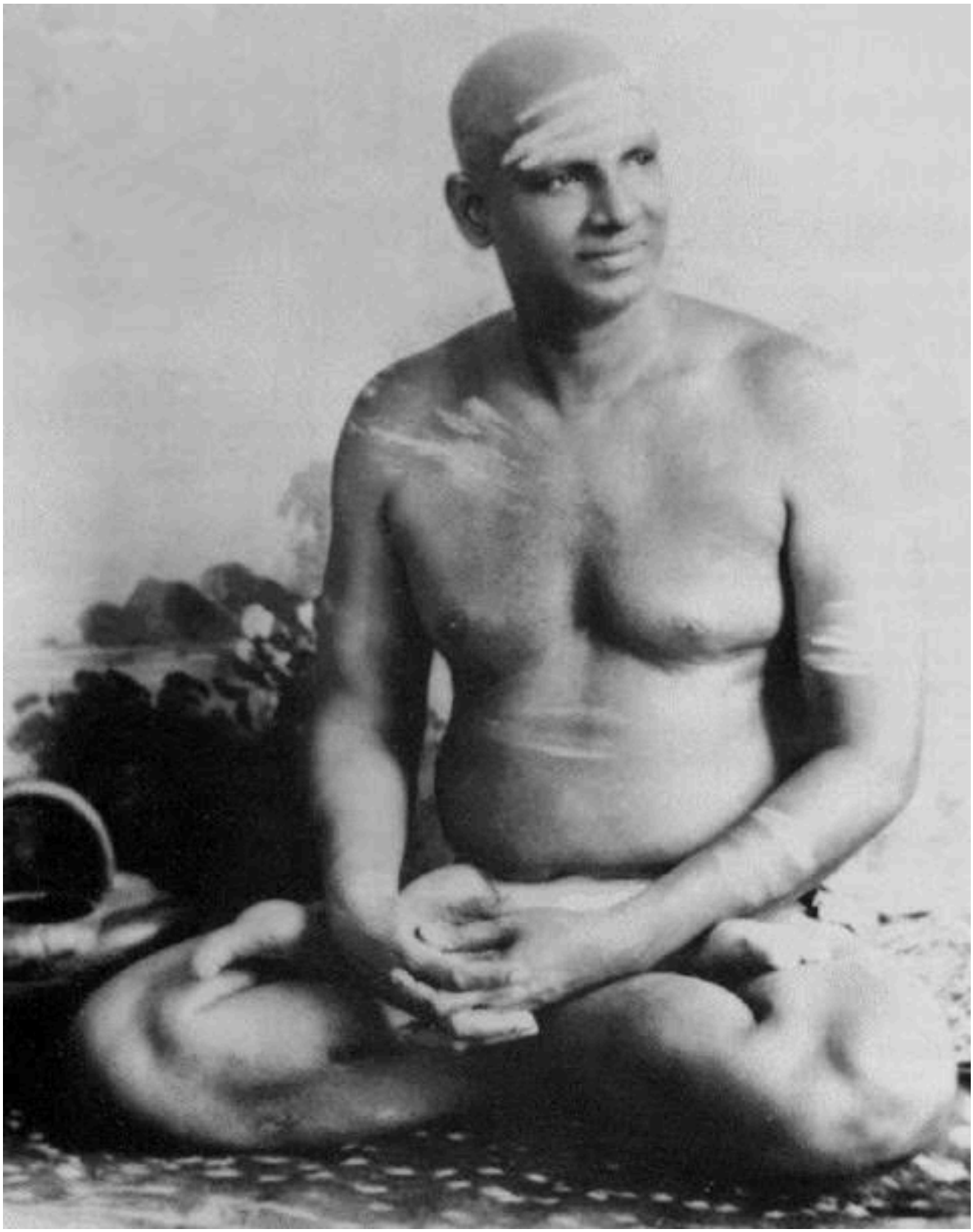

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SIVANANDA

DAILY READINGS

Compiled From

THE WRITINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BY

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

RADHA HOARE SUSAN THOMAS

GURUDEV'S SUBLIME TEACHINGS

The Uniqueness of man is mind & intellect. The power of reasoning, logic, analysis, investigation, research etc. are not be found among any other species of living beings in this planetary existence. Bondage and Liberation are ultimately the outcome of how human individual makes use of Supreme & Unique faculty. No wonder, therefore, our ancients declared that tge mind itself is the cause of man's bondage and maya as well as liberation through divine illumination. Therefore, the greatest importance has been given to the right cultivation of our mind through filling it with noble thoughts, Sublime sentiments, Soul elevating ideals and divine reflection & meditations.

The above process of Systematic & Scientific mind transformation is by engaging in the study of sacred Scriptures and Inspired Spiritual teachings of Sages & Saints. In the Vedanta , the Upanishad declares that spiritual study should never be neglected. 'The great world teacher Shnakaracharya reiterates this injunction. Maharshi Patanjali makes such study one of thr foundational practices for the Sadhaka, in his Yoga-Sutras. Such study is called Swadhyaya. It is indispensible spiritual food for the inner man, nurturing his quest after divine illumination (enlightment).

'SIVANANDA -Daily readings' , the compiler H.H.Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj, a dear & esteemed spiritual brother of mine, has culled the invaluable essence of Beloved & Worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivananda's wisdom teachings in an invaluable spiritual reader arranged in the form of one page of Swadhyaya for each day of the 365 days of a year. He has done an inestimable service to the world of Spiritual Seekers. They are indeed fortunate.

Lastly, the GIDLSC organisers have done well in bringing out a new edition of this work, and thus making this treasure available to us all today.

It is certainly worth possessing. It also makes a wonderful gift. May all be happy.

Swami Chidananda

SIVANANDA , A DIVINE

INTERVENTION

The advent of His Holiness Swami Sivananda in the modern world is undoubtedly a phenomenon by itself. The current of human history often dashes against the right bank or the left bank of the river of evolution at different times in the context of relative experience. What is usually regarded as a Divine Incamation is only a nomen clature to signify the manifestaiton of the Rectifying orce of the Universal Harmony to bring about a balance between the movements of human nature, and nature in general.

Right from the beginning of the Twentieth Century there has been an accelerated march of scientific discoveries, especially in the field of astronomy and physics. Side by side, went an industrial revolution in society and the eagerness for greater comfort and ease pushed the button towards a disproportionately mechanised system of living with the help of gadgets and inventions ofdifferent types. It looked as if the human being got transformed of different types. It looked as ifthe human beong got transformed into almost a walking machine.

When the soul is dead,Godalsodies at the same time. For, God is the names we give to the Soul of the Cosmos. The soulisthequintessential essence of the bottom of thr being of anything. To imagine that structurecansurvive independent of the cohesive force which cements the various parts of the sturcturetogiveitthe appearance of a whole, is to reach the height of illogicality in thought and outlook.Thepartswork together in collaboration, whether in the world outside, the body within or the societyinthemiddle, because of there being Invisible Presence which eludes the grasp of even thehighestrationality conceivable. It is at this hour, when the vehicle of life has gone out of gear, thatthehealth – inu=fusing positive power of the Absolute takes some spatiotemporal formanddoesthe needful in restoring the lost harmony, whether in art, sociology, politics orreligion.

The coming of Swami Sivananda is such a divine intervention for worldsolidarity and mankind's peace. The "Daily Readings" from the teachings of such a Superman is bound to bring he needed guidance and solace to every seeker of the path of the Higher Life. The writings of this phenomenonal personality touch almost evry vital subject relating to man's inner and outer life. The vast range of this prolific literature is not easliy accessible to the reader, especially as many of the works have already gone out of print, and also the themes of the writings are too varied and extend over a very large area of study. The present arrangement of select passages from these profound writings intended for a daily reading is bound to provide to everyone a series of studies from the pages of the Book of Spiritual Life in general.

Ijoyfully commend this interesting and most helpful production to all aspirants treading the way ofLife Eternal.

Swami Krishnananda

DEDICATED TO THE LOTUS FEET

OF GURUDEV SIVANANDA

Gods's cosmic love brings about the incarnation of His light in our midst. Such incarnations are our gurus, prophets and saviours. They don a human garb so that they can be approached by human beings. If they had unearthly personalities, then the common man would be scared away from them, and this would defeat their very purpose in descending on this earth.

Let us not forget that when we reer to Bhagavan Sivananda, it is not to his body that we refer to but of the divinty within him. We live in body consciousness but he lived in the body, conscious of God.

It is to that God, in that body that we pay our homage. That body was His temple Bhagavan Sivananda was not a 'human being'. He was an ideal. He was(is) the cosmic being. He is love infinite. He is love infinite. He is absolute selflessness. He is God consciousness. He is the light of self-knowledge.

The light of self-knowledge shone in every thought, word an deed that preceeded from him during his divine life on earth. His thoughts, words and deeds were in perfect accord. They are preserved in his recorded words. Through them God's own light and love shine, illumining the path of our life. In his words truth stands revealed.

Open the eyes of your heart. Let Gurudev Sivananda enshrined in your heart communicate his love and his light direct to your very soul. Read a page a day with faith, love and devotion. Your daily life will soon be transformed into a divine life of peace, bliss and the highest wisdom.

Dust of Gurudev's lotus feet

Swami Venkatesananda

1 JANUARY-REAL PEACE

How long doyouwanttolivealifeofduality?Alife of restlessness and discontentment? How long do youwishtoleadalifeofignorance,hatred, bitterness, and separation? How long do you wish to continueyourownselfishstruggles? How long do you wish to behold differences and distinctions? Howlongdoyouwishtokeepthe barriers between man and man?

You cry forshanti,forpeace.Butwheretoget it? Through whom to get it? Realise peace in your own heartthroughassociationwithsagesand by meditation. You can find this peace only in the stillness, onlywithinyourownself.Youcertainly cannot find it in objects. Look within.

Sit silentlyinaquietroomforoneortwohours. Close your eyes and concentrate on the point betweentheeyebrows.Withdrawthemindand the senses from the external objects. Be still.

Silencethesurgingthoughtsandthebubbling emotions. Forget the body. Forget the world. Enter into thegreatcalm.Divedeepdownintothe recesses of your heart. Plunge into the ocean of peace.Nowyoucanrealiseyouronenesswith the supreme self.

Be regularinyourpractice.Thisisofparamount importance. It is useless to talk of the cessation of war, whilstyouarestillfullofpettyhatredand jealousy. So first remove your own inharmonious vibrations.Thentherewillbenomorewar between nations. It is only the individuals that constitute a nation.

Lead a lifeofpeace.Killsuspicion.Killenvy.Kill prejudice. Kill selfishness. Kill the greed for power and possession.Dothisruthlessly.

Lead a simplelife.Practisedailymeditationand establish peace in your own heart. Then you will radiate it to allwhocomeincontactwithyou.

Mysterious isthispeace.Ifyouenjoythispeace, you will be contributing peace to the whole world. Realisethepeacethatpassethallunderstanding and be free.

2 JANUARY - LEARN LEARN LEARN

The worldisforyoureducation.Youlearnseverallessonsdaily.Ifyoulearnallyoucan,ifyou utilise allopportunitiestothebestadvantage,inthespiritofyoga,thenyourcapacitiesandwill- power willdevelop.Yougrow,youevolve,youexpand.

There iseternaldevelopment-youaremovingforwardtowardsthegoal.Allveilsdropdown.All limitationsandbarriersareannihilated.Allshacklesorfettersarerentasunder.Youreceivemore and moredivinelight,knowledge,purity,peaceandspiritualstrength.

You aretheauthorofyourfate.Youyourselfhavecreatedthis.Youyourselfareentirely responsibleforthis.Youarethemakerofsufferingandjoy.Justasasilkwormhascreateda cocoonforitsowndestruction,soalsoyouhavecreatedthiscageofflesh,byyourownkarma (action), by attraction and repulsion, and false egoism.

You havebecomeaslaveoftheflesh.Youhavebecomeaslaveofbodyandmind,ofcountless desires.Youaresunkdeepinthequagmireofsamsara(ignorance).Donotsleepanylonger. Awake. Come out of this illusory mayaic cage, now.

Cast asidetheerroneousidea:"Iamthebody".Developtheconsciousnessandtherealisationof the real "I"withinyou.BeawareoftheSatchidanandaBrahman,theatma,thesupremeself,the one consciousness-thatwhichconnectsallheartstogetherbyacommonthread.

Awaken yourself totheconsciousrealisationofyouractualidentitywiththesupremeself.Think of the self continuously.Thiswillleadtoself-realisation.Thestrugglemustbekeen.The endeavour must besincere.Themotivemustbepure.

There must be irondiscipline,irondetermination,ironwillandconstantsadhana(practice).Then there is not a bit ofdifficultyintheattainmentofthefinalbeatitudeoflife.Thislifeissublimein its nature. It is resplendentwithspirituallight.Itisradiantwithsplendour.Itisvibrantwith ecstasy. It is repletewithpeace.

3 JANUARY - PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

Difficulties exist onlythatyoumaygrowstrongbyovercomingthem.Soovercomealldifficulties, one by one, patiently.Ifyoufailtentimes,donotdespair.Ifyoufailahundredtimes,donotbe disheartened. If youfailathousandtimes,riseupandmarchonboldly.Failuresareindeed stepping-stones tosuccess.

Watch your speech.Watcheveryword.Speaknowordthatisimpureorvulgar,orthatcanaffect the feelings of others.Neverallowanuncleanthoughttoenteryourmind.Ifitdoesenteryour mind, drive it out atonce.Purifyyourmindsothatanimpurethoughtmaynotbeabletogain entrance. Strengthenyourresolve.Patientlyperishistinyoursadhana(spiritualpractice). Intensify yourdispassionandyearningforliberation.Destroyyourpersonalelement.Forgive those who harmyou.Giveloveforhatred.Overcomeevilbygood.Resistthepromptingsofthe lower nature.

Make yourbodyyourobedientservant,yourslave.Donotgiveupyoursadhanasimplybecause you do notmakeanyprogress.Struggleaslongasyoucaneachtime.Eachtimeyouwillbenearer to success.

Give, give,give.Givingistheverynatureoflove.Givingexpandsandpurifiestheheart.Askfor no return.Askfornogratitude.Wherethereisnofreegiving,thereisnoroomforGod.Giving itself is thesecretofabundance.Interestandattentionwillstrengthenyourwill.Cultivate attention to a considerable degree.

Constantly repeat some inspiring verses from the Gita or the Upanishads. Constantly repeat some mantras suchas:OmSatchidanandaorOmNamoNarayanaya.Thiswillbeyourdivine background of thought: This will be a shield, to counteract the objectionable impure thoughts.

Follow theseinstructionscarefully.Youaresuretoattainself-realisationhereandnow.

If you realisetheoneinallandtheallinone,youareanilluminedsage.Besereneintheoneness of things. Allduality willdisappearbyitself.Onealoneisthelivingreality.Allisillusory.Allis maya's jugglery.Oneappearsastheall.Reject,negatetheall.Realisetheoneandbefree.

4 JANUARY - LIFE IS ARTIFICIAL

Life has become very artificial. There is physical,mental and moral degeneration. You do not find robust, stalwart, healthy people. Longevity isunknown. Everywhere you see puny, stunted creatures with dilapidated frames and sickly appearance. They cannot even walk a short distance.

Children beget children. People die like moths. They have become weaklings, effeminate, impotent.

There is wholesale devastation by earthquake. Divorce courts are increasing. One nation is afraid of another nation. Each nation is suspecting the other nation of preparing for war. Life has become a matter of uncertainty. It has become a mass of confusion, chaos and bewilderment. It has become very stormy and boisterous. It is full of under-currents, cross-currents and mixed currents!

You can escape from these troubles and difficulties if you lead a life of dispassion, self-restraint, purity and selfless service; if you develop pure cosmic love; if you develop the habit of taking the right view, right thinking, right feeling, right acting, all with the right attitude - and if you practise devotion and meditation.

Dispassion must be of that type that is born of pure viveka (nitya-anitya vastu viveka - discrimination between the real and the unreal). This is a rare commodity, a rare virtue. Seek everlasting bliss and peace in the atman or the soul within by purifying the mind and practising meditation. This is the only remedy to get rid of the pains of samsara (worldly existence).

Be quick in taking to spiritual pursuits. Hairs are becoming grey. Teeth are falling. The senses are getting cold. Practise meditation while you are young. After retirement from service you can do nothing.

5 JANUARY - PRESENCE OF MIND

Just reflect for a while when you have failed inanattempt. Try to be more careful in the next attempt. Try to remove those factors that led youtofail previously. Fortify yourself now. Be careful and vigilant. Be active and nimble as the squirrel.Bequick and at the same time be capable and efficient. Do not commit mistakes.

Call forth all your latent energies or dormant faculties. When the house is on fire - how alert you are. How skilfully and promptly you act at that particular moment. You do not know where the power and the energy are flowing from at that time. You are fully concentrated. You contrive by skilful methods, then and there, to save your property and the lives of those dwelling in the house. You do marvellous actions and then, when the difficulty is over you say that some mysterious 'power of God' has worked through you!

Always cut the Gordian knot at once. Do not waste time. When once you have resolved on a definite line of action, carry it out dexterously, with a cool and calculating deliberation and consideration. Procrastination is the thief of time. One who procrastinates can never succeed in life, or in any of his undertakings.

The vast majority of persons, even so-called 'educated' people, have no definite aim in life. They drift here and there like a log of wood on a restless ocean. They do not know what to do. After finishing their B.A. or M.A. courses students do not know how to proceed. They do not have power of judgement to select any good vocation that is suitable to their temperament, that will bring them prosperity in life. They become lazy. They are not suitable for any kind of speculative business or any kind of activity demanding knack, pluck and skill.

In persons of this sort, those who waste their time and energy, they finish their life's career in gloom, despair and sorrow. The energy, the intellect are there but they have no ideal, no clear-cut programme of life. Their life is a failure.

Clearly understand the purpose of life. Then chalk out the line of work that is congenial to your aim. Live up to your ideal. You can realise the ideal right now, this very second. But if you walk with faltering steps it will take ten years. The ideal must be there and then you can develop your will.

6 JANUARY - BECOME DYNAMIC

If a man feels even a little bit for his present deplorable condition; if he attempts even to show a slight improvement; if there is a little receptive attitude; then he can be corrected and he can make progress on the path of yoga. If he is obstinate and pigheaded, if he is absolutely self-willed, if he deliberately shuts his eyes or hardens his heart against the truth or divine light - then no one can help him.

The aspirant shouldgivehisfullconsent,heshouldconsentwithallhisbeing(sarvabhava)for the change of his lowernatureintodivinenature.Hemustmaketotal,unreserved,ungrudging self-surrender to theLordortheguru.Hemusthavethetruespiritandhemusthaveperishistent endeavour. Then onlytherealchangewillcome.

Yoga can be practisedonlybythosewhoareveryearnestaboutitandwhoarereadytoannihilate their little ego anditsdemands.Therearenohalfmeasuresonthespiritualpath.Rigiddiscipline of the senses, andthemind,rigoroustapas(penance)andconstantmeditation,arenecessaryfor the attainment ofGod-realisation.

The hostile forcesareeverreadytooverwhelmyouifyouarenotvigilant,ifyougivetheleast sanction, or thesmallestopeningforthem.Yogacannotbepractisedifyouclingtoyourlittleself, your old habits,youroldunregenerateandself-assertivelowernature.

You cannot leadadoublelife.Puredivinelife,thelifeofyoga,cannotco-existwithamundane life of passionandignorance.Riseabovethepettyhumanleveltothehigherlevelofdivine consciousness.

You cannot claimfreedomforyourpettymindandlittleegoifyouwanttobecomeayogi.The lower nature withitsretinueofarrogance,ignorance,andturbulence,standsinthewayofthe descent of divinelight.

Know the truth, theabsolute.Thenyouaresaved,youareliberated,youareenlightened,youare free. You can knowBrahmanonlybybecomingBrahman.TobecomeBrahmanistoidentify yourself with the supremesoulwhichconstitutesyourdivinenature.Theriverjoinstheocean and becomes one withit.Thedropmixeswiththeseaandbecomesonewiththesea.

7 JANUARY - THESPIRITUAL PATH

Youth is the best time, the most fitting time in a man's life, to devote himself to spiritual aspiration and sadhana (spiritual practice). The spiritual life is practical from beginning to end. The love for the ideal should be single-minded and whole-hearted.

The spiritual path is an unknown path which is as straight and narrow as a razor. On it there is no other light than that of faith and divine grace to guide the aspirant. There is no other sustenance than devotion.

The track ahead cannot be seen. The going is uncertain. And many pitfalls await the unwary. The traveller, the aspirant, must travel in the dark. He must march courageously forward. He will reach great illumination at the journey's end.

The spiritual path demands complete mastery over the flesh. Proceed gradually. Intensify the aspiration you have. Have a keen thirst for the realisation of the supreme. Keep alive thy aspiration, undiminished and bright. Be thou firm in thy faith.

Empty thy heart of all earthly things. The spiritual life is a life of child-like simplicity. What is needed in spiritual life is a sincere aspiration for the life of the spirit. It needs an earnest dedication to it. And it needs a whole-souled devotion and application to the realisation of the ideal. Your heart must be solely and entirely centred on God. It must be centred on God alone - deeply, passionately and steadily.

Be sincere to thy very core. This is the most essential thing. Spiritual life is based on the complete conquest of the lower nature. Upon this pedestal of perfect self mastery and right conduct, the edifice of godliness and divine life may be built. May thy spiritual life and example inspire one and all.

Man wants a fuller life. He livesfor a fuller life. That is life in eternal Brahman. Life is an endless series of awakenings. Understand life of harmony and peace. Life holds the key. Unlock the mystery of your own being andattain life eternal.

8 JANUARY - SINNER TODAY SAINT TOMORROW

Critical times test the faith of the devotee. He who has faith in the Lord must pass through the fire of suffering. Suffering is not misfortune; it helps one to grow. Suffering and pain open the door to wisdom. "Not to be hurt by others", is more difficult than, "not to hurt others". Blessed are those that suffer because suffering helps them to evolve quickly – suffering is the substance of spiritual life.

The individual soul is a business man - his karmas (actions) are his commerce - good and bad fruits of his good and bad actions are his profit and loss. The world is his business house. Think well and judge what is right before you act. Involuntary, unintentional or unconscious actions do not constitute karma, because volition is the most important factor in determining karma, and here it is absent. Sin is only a mistake, mis-directed energy. Mistakes are lessons in wisdom. The essence of evil and sin is belief in things that perish.

The essence of religion is truth and the essence of law is virtue. Two birds, inseparable friends, cling to the same tree. One of them eats sweet and bitter fruits and the other watches without eating. The tree is the body. One bird is the individual soul who enjoys the fruits of his actions - pleasure and pain. The other bird is the Lord, who remains as a witness without eating.

Respect of the soul is praiseworthy. Respect of the body is despicable. A scientist conquers external nature but a yogi conquers the mind and internal nature. The sinner of today is the saint of tomorrow. Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

Your goal is God. Your centre is God. Your ideal is God. Turn back to God and realise everlasting bliss. Resting on him you will be saved. As the lamp cannot burn without oil, so too, you cannot live without God. God is within you all the time, inspiring you, lifting you up. Withdraw.

Aspire.

Meditate. Realise.

9 JANUARY - THE PEAK OF PERFECTION

You can climb the peak of perfection throughresolute will, intense dispassion, renunciation and rigorous Meditation. Sublime divine thoughtisvery powerful, it is a dynamic transmuting force. Diligently seek the path of truth; tread it carefullyand vigilantly, for you may slip and fall. Love is harmlessness, kindness, compassion. Nothingcantempt you if you are regular in meditation. He who is pure at heart has already found divinity.Renunciation of egoism is the direct way to the eternal.

Knowledge of theimperishablebestowsperfectfreedomandindependence. Where egoism is, immortality is not;whereimmortalityis,egoismisnot.Concentration will give you great power. Collect the scatteredraysofthemind.Lustandgreedmakeyouaspiritual bankrupt. Purity and meditation bestowonyouinexhaustibledivinewealth.

A yogi becomesthemaster-builderofthetempleoftruth.Passthrough the gate of wisdom - you will reachtheillimitabledomainofeternalbliss.Hewhoisendowed with discrimination and power andconcentrationclimbsrapidlytothepeakofillumination.Your real guru (preceptor) is your ownheart-heistheindweller,theinnerruler.

Longingforfinalliberationisthehungerforthespiritualfoodofknowledge of the eternal. Mind is themirrorthroughwhichtheeternalappearsastheuniverseofnames and forms. Be in the world-notoftheworld.Thisisthehighestyoga.thisistheeternalwisdom. The wise man is ever eager to learn, he never poses as a teacher.

This visibleworldisthemirroroftheinvisibleBrahman.Youareaslave of circumstances because you do notmeditateregularly.Youwilleasilygetilluminationinsolitude. Solitude has its own charms -prepareyourselfforlifeinseclusion.Controlandpreserve energy through silence, brahmacharya(celibacy)andpranayama(yogabreathing),-youwillhave wonderful meditation. Love thatmanwhodislikesyou-youwillgrowstrong.Moneywasted can be restored, but time wasted islostforever.Findoutyourcentre-thatcentreisperfectharmony, eternal bliss, your own immortalsoul.

10 JANUARY - THE FOUNDATION OF ETHICS

Put yourself in the place of others. Learn this greatsecret. What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others. The doctrine of unity of the Atman (the self), is the foundation of morality.

No one tries to harm himself. How can one, who knows that each and every being is his own self, harm anyone?

Share what you have with others. This is vedanta. Aparigraha (non covetousness) is a very important item in the practice of yama or self-restraint, in raja yoga of Patanjali. Aparigraha is non-receiving of gifts, it is freedom from covetousness. This leads to purity of thought and independence.

The purer you are, the nearer to God you will be. A pure heart is the most essential thing required for good health of body and mind, and for attaining God realisation. Religion resides only in the pure heart. Only the simple can be pure. He who is pure in heart attains God-realisation.

Humility is a fundamental virtue. It is the secret of the saints. He who lives the life of humility and simplicity, earns the supreme bliss of eternity. Humility is freedom from self-conceit.

Obliterate the sense of I-ness. Obliterate the idea of, "I am doing" or, "I will do". You are on the way to infinity. You will take the plunge into the ocean of divine wisdom and love.

You are not the doer. Do not think of the good deeds you have done and do not even expect any thanks for what you do. If you help a man, never remember it and if a man helps you, never forget it.

Spiritual life and devotion to God are essential for preventing a feeling of frustration in life. In the realm of perfection, harmony, peace and freedom, is the abode of Brahman. Reach this abode through purity, love, and meditation. Go to the source of life itself. You will know everything.

11 JANUARY - ANALECTS OF SIVANANDA

Solitude is the soul's best friend.Silenceisbetterthanargument.Heisreallyblessedwhocan suit his temper to any circumstances.Griefdestroysstrength,health,intellectandwisdom.Conquer grief through discrimination,enquiry,andthemeditationontheatman(self).

Worry is a waste.Avoidit.Rathersing,pray,meditate,enquire,cogitateanddiscriminate. Dive into the BhagavadGita.Youwillbecomefearless.Youwillriseaboveallworries. Idleness is theenemyofpeaceofthesoul.Stopcomplaining.Bethankfulthatthereisaperfect law of health,towhicheveryonehasaccess.Obeythatlawandbehappy.Practiseasanas - especially siddhasana,sarvangasanaandsirshasanathiswillenableyoutogetcontrolover the vital energy. Ifyourmindiscoolandyourheartisfull,thentheentireworldwillbecooltoo. Replace doubt,despairandhate,withfaith,hopeandlove.Haveplentyofcommonsense. Think quickly and carryoutyourdecisionsresolutelyintimesofemergency.Changeispainfulbut ever needful. Godchoosesthemeekandtheinnocenttoachievehiswill.

Many talklikephilosophersandsages-buttheylivelikefools.Veilafterveilhastobelifted. The illusions of life are to be torn away before life divine can be attained.

Lifeisaperpetualstruggle.Itisaperpetualdyinguntilyouarefacetofacewith God.Manis verily thesacrifice.Natureistheladderonwhichweclimbuptothe Lord.Donothaveasadface - you will affect others.

Becheerfulalways.Rejoice.Radiatejoyandcheer.Radiatehealthandlight.Letyoureyes ever shinewiththelightofsupremelove.Therealityoflove-tearsisnotintheeyesbutintheheart of love.

"God is Truth. God is Love. God is Peace. God is Bliss.

God and God's law are one.

The Law and the Law-giver are one.

God is the law himself, He never breaks his laws.

God and his law abide everywhere and govern everything.

Glory to God. Glory to God."

12 JANUARY - ELUSIVE HAPPINESS

Man wants happiness. He triestogetitfrommoney,frompower,fromwoman, from son, from position, and so on. He rushesfromonethingtoanothertryingtofindhappiness. He gets knocks, blows, failure and disappointment.Helaughs,dances,weepsandmourns. His senses get exhausted. He gets disgust forobjects.Eventually,heexperiencesthatsense objects are illusory, and that real lasting happinesscannotbefoundinthem.

Man feels the need foraparticularobject.Hetriestogetit.Ifhesucceeds, he is delighted for a moment. If he fails, heissunkindespairandsorrow;heisgloomyanddepressed. If he loses an object, he becomes verymiserable.

As soon as one want isgratified,anothernewwantcropsup.Thereisnoend to his wants. Cares, worries, anxieties andfearco-existwithwantsanddesires.Wantistheproduct or offspring of ignorance. Brahman isall-full.AllwantsaresatisfiedinBrahman.

The restlessness of themindiskeptupbyallthesewants.Hewhowants nothing is a mighty emperor of the world.SriSankarasays:"Thatcarefreesaint,whomovesabout with a kowpeen or loincloth only, withoutpossessions,withouttheideaofownership,without any wants, is the most happy personintheworld."Wantsanddesirescanbeeradicatedbyself-realisation only. Any number of zeroshavenovalueunlessyouadda'1'beforethem.Similarly, even if you possess the wealth of the wholeworld,itisnothingifyoudonotleadaspiritual life, if you have no spiritual wealth, if youhavenoself-realisation.

You will have to add theatmantothelifehere.ThatiswhytheLordJesussays: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven anditsrighteousness,andallthesethingsshallbeadded unto you".

Mind is greater than thesenses.Pureintellectisgreaterthanthemind.Atman is greater than the intellect. There is nothinggreaterthanatman.
Brahman is without senses,mind,andprana.Heiswithinandwithoutallbeings. He is immovable. He is extremely subtle. Heisthelightofalllights.

13 JANUARY - AVOID EXTREMES

The mind always wants to be doing something. When it attaches itself to the objects it cherishes, the mind feels amused and happy. There can be attraction without attachment. You can be attracted to a beautiful rose, but you are not attached to it. Attachment comes after possession and enjoyment.

Attachment, love, ananda (bliss), all go together. You are attached to your wife and children and so on. You love them because they give you ananda. As this world is illusory and as, through this illusion, pain appears as pleasure, you must cut as under all worldly attachments ruthlessly. Direct your love and attachment towards the reality, towards Brahman, towards the substratum which lies at the back of all objects, which is the witness of all activities taking place in the buddhi (intellect).

It is difficult to divert the mind which from early childhood has fallen into the pernicious habit of seeking external pleasures and which continues to do so unless you give it something superior to be amused with. Intellectual pleasure is far superior to sensual pleasure. So too, ananda (joy from meditation) is far superior to intellectual pleasure. Spiritual bliss gained from self-realisation, is infinite, immeasurable, unbounded. It is anandaghana (a solid mass of bliss).

Keep the mind in a state of moderation. The mind likes always to run to extremes. It runs either to extreme joy or extreme depression. Extremes meet and bring about a reaction. In excessive joy the mind cannot be calmed. Hence let the mind always be calm and cheerful.

Ghee (clarified butter) has two states - solid and liquid. So it is with the mind. In the waking state it is solid and in the deep sleep state it is liquid. In the solid state it is limited and gross. This is why it has finite experiences. In the liquid state it is limitless and so the jiva (soul) experiences the homogeneous and limitless bliss. In the deep sleep state there is no ego, no desire, hence it experiences the limitless bliss of the atman.

14 JANUARY - CONTROL YOUR DESIRES

In this ocean of samsara (worldly existence) desires are like crocodiles. Kill them as soon as they arise on the surface of the mind. Do not yield to them; do not become despondent about all the trials that beset you. Make friends with the pure (satvic) mind and destroy the impure mind with the help of the pure mind. Make the mind rest in the ever-blissful atman.

When a desire arises in your mind, consult your discrimination. That will tell you, at once, that desire is attended with pain, that only vairagya (dispassion) and tyaga (renunciation) will bring you satisfaction and peace of mind. It will advise you to renounce desire immediately. It will advise
you to take up the study of the Upanishads, to repeat OM and to meditate in a solitary place. Think deeply whether this new desire will give you happiness or spiritual gain. You must starve out the obnoxious desires by not allowing the mind to dwell on such desires.

You have no desire for a thing until you know what it is like. Only after you have seen it, tasted it, or touched it, will you know what it is like, will you have a longing for it. Therefore do not touch, taste or see anything that is likely to taint the imagination. Put down vicious desires through virtuous desires. Then give up virtuous desires, through one strong desire. And that is the desire for God. In the long run you will even have to abandon this desire for God. Kill the thoughts, practise thoughtlessness. In this way you destroy desire.

Free yourself from the crocodile of desires. Do not be disheartened. Cheer yourself up. Stand like a lion. Destroy the impure mind with the pure mind. Make friends with - the satvic (pure) mind and rest peacefully in the atman.

THE INNER BATTLE
"The soldier fights for a few hours only,
But the aspirant's battle goes on day and night.
It is verily a hard battle, a fierce battle
And it lasts till the end of his life.
This battle is raging in the field of the mind.
Satva (purity) fights with rajas (impurity) and tamas (inertia),
Higher mind wages war with the lower mind.
Contentment fights with greed,
Patience fights with anger.
Brahmacharya (celibacy) fights with lust,
Humility fights with pride.
Fight, my brother, valiantly.
Raise the sword of Ram Nam (the divine name)
So says Sivananda”

15 JANUARY - SELF RELIANCE

Pure reasonurgesamantoself-reliance. For this reason the great founders and eminent teachers of all religions,haverepeatedlyproclaimed the need for recognising the Godhead within and for self-relianceinthelastresort,rather than texts, persons or customs.

Self-controlisgreatestintheman whose life is dominated by ideals and general principles of conduct.Thefinalendofmoraldiscipline is self-control. The whole nature of man must be disciplined.Eachelementrequires its specific training. Discipline harmonises the opposing elementsinhim.Self-controlwillenable the aspirant to know the truth, to desire the good, and to win theright-andthustorealise the reality.

Disciplineisthetrainingofourfaculties, through instructions and through exercise, in accordance with somesettledprincipleofauthority. You must discipline not only the intellect but also the will and the emotions.

A disciplinedmancontrolshisactions. He is no longer at the mercy of the moment. He ceases to be a slave ofhisimpulsesandsenses (indriyas). Such mastery is not the result of one day's effort. It is acquiredonlybyprotractedpractice and daily self-discipline. You must learn to refuse the demands andimpulsesofyourlower nature. A self-controlled man is able to resist wrong actions, towards whichaworldlymanismost strongly impelled.

Discipline yourselfandgrowstrong. Stand unshaken. Rest in the atman (the immortal blissful soul). Perfection isnotimpossibleof achievement. It is within the easy reach of human endeavour. Alldesires are fulfilledafterself-realisation.

Ifyou lack wisdom, askGodsincerely and he will give you wisdom. Physical health, intellectual understanding, moral integrityand spiritual wisdo

16 JANUARY - MANOF SELF-CONTROL

Men of self-control becomesinlessandfearless. They acquire great results. Every sort of excitement is effortlesslycontrolledbyself-control. The enemies of the self-controlled man are seen by him - they arelust,anger,desire-asifthey dwell in a separate body.

The self-controlled manbecomesdesirousofliberation. He quietly bears present joys and sorrows and griefs; he is neveroverjoyedordepressed by prospective ones. He is devoid of all vindictiveness and guile.Heisunaffectedbypraise or censure.

A self-controlled maniswell-balanced.Hehasgood manners, purity and fortitude. He is a perfect master of his passions.Heisdevotedtouniversal benevolence. He never feels animosity for anyone. He is tranquil,wiseandcheerful.

A self-controlled manisendowedwithintelligence. He gains universal reverence. He fears no creature and in returnheisfearedbynocreature.

Overcoming lustandanger,practisingthevow of brahmacharya (celibacy) and becoming a complete masterofthesensestheholyonepatiently waits. Practising the austerest of penances and observingthemostrigidofrestraints,helives in the world and calmly waits the time. He is like somebodywhohasabodyandyetseemsto know that he is not subject to destruction.

Meditation isfreeingthemindfromallobjectsand thoughts of sensual enjoyment. If this is done then God-realisationcomesofitself.Godwillenthrone himself in your heart and meditation will come of itself.Ifyoubringalightintoacavewhich has been dark for thousands of years, the darkness willvanishatonce,byitself.Youdonot have to strive to drive the darkness away. If you attempt toputyourhandintoapotwhichisfilled with dust and dirt, you cannot. But if you empty it, then youcaneasilyputyourhandintothepot. Even so, if you empty the mind of all its dust and dirt, Godwillenterintoitinthetwinklingof an eye.

17 JANUARY - DISCIPLINE OF SPEECH

Tame your tongue-itisanunrulydevil.Sacrifice,gift,austerity,thestudyofthesacredscriptures, truthfulness -allthesewillhelpyoutodevelopvirtuousconduct.Practiseausterityofspeech. Whatever youspeakmustbetruthfulandbeneficent.

Do not utteranythingthatwillgiveannoyancetoanybody.Athoughtlessmanwhohasnot controlled hisorganofspeechandwhospeaksatrandom,isentangledinthefoolishnessofhis own words.Thereforebeverycarefulwhenyouspeak.

Speak little.Thinktwice,thinktentimesbeforeyouspeak.Weighthewordscarefully,beforethey come outofyourmouth.Speakonlywordswhichcandogoodtoothers.Alwaysbepoliteand courteous. Never speak in a harsh tone, never hurt the feelings of others.

Do not talkmuch.Becomeamanofmeasuredwords.Godhasgivenyoutwoearsandtwoeyes. But He onlygaveyouonetongue,sothatyoumayhearandseemorethanyouspeak.Lingual diarrhoea is a terrible disease.

Wordsexistforthetransmissionofideas.Wordsandideasareinseparable;theyarelikefireand its heat,orlikeiceanditscoldness.Becarefulintheselectionofyourwords.Theycanproduce violentdisturbanceinthefeelingsofothers.Speakonlythosewordswhichgivehappinessand comfort to others.

Thinkmore.Domuch.Speakmeasuredwords.Letyourtongueneverutteranunkindword,or a harshword.Letitneverspeaksharpcriticism.Anundisciplinedtongueisaswordthatcutsothers' hearts. It produces a wound that will never heal, even in a lifetime.

Observesilence.Youwillhaveabundantenergy.Youwillconserveyourenergythisway.Youwill enjoy peaceofmindandgoodhealth.Youwillbeabletoturnoutmorework.Silenceissoothing for brainandnerves.

Your goalisGod.YourcentreisGod.YouridealisGod.TurnbacktoGodandrealiseeverlasting bliss. RestingonHimyouwillbesaved.Asthelampcannotburnwithoutoil,sotoo,youcannot live withoutGod.Godiswithinyouallthetime,inspiringyou,liftingyouup.Withdraw.Aspire. Meditate. Realise.

18 JANUARY - OBSERVE SILENCE

Use measured wordsintalking.Donottalkmuch.Trytofinishaconversationwithinafew minutes. Understandthenatureofthemanrightly.Whenheentersyourofficeorhouseforan interview speak politelyandwithgreatrespectfortheman.Thensendhimawayimmediately and conserve yourenergy.

Do not indulgeinlongunnecessarytalksanddiscussions.Manisasocialanimal.Heisproneto much talking. Heisverygarrulous.Thistalkativehabitisingrainedinhimandheismuchtroubled when he cannotgetanycompany.Hedoesnotwanttogoinforseclusion.

The observanceofmauna(silence)isdeathandcapitalpunishmentforhim.Ladiesarestillmore garrulous. Theyalwayscreatesomekindofunnecessaryquarrelsinthehouse.

I always prescribethepracticeofmaunaforoneandall,asthishelpsinthepreservationofenergy, developmentOfwillandenjoymentofpeace.Allsortsofquarrels,misunderstandings,anger, etc., can beeasilyavoidedbymaunafortwohoursdailyandforsixhoursonSundays,andfora full week onlongholidays.

Even duringotherperiodstalkveryfewwords.Whenyouspeak,speakgentlyandsweetly.During mauna youmustlivealone.Donotmixwithotherpeople.Donotevenexpressyourideaswith gestures.

The otherchannelbywhichenergyiswasted,isthemind.Thiswastageisduetoloosethinking, worrying,angerandfear.Justasenergyiswastedintoomuchtalk,soalsoenergyiswastedin loose thinking.

If this mentalenergyisconserved,youwillhaveatyourdisposalatremendousstoreofenergy. This you canutiliseforvariousotherpurposesandsadhana(spiritualpractice).Ifthisenergyis conserved youwillfeelthatyouareverypowerful.Youwillfeelnoexhaustionevenifyouturn out tremendouswork.

To do this you havetowatchyourthoughtsverycarefully,byintrospectionandmeditation.You will have to divertthementalenergytousefulthinking.Therewillbesomestruggleinthe beginning. But aftersometimethemindwillnaturallythinkofauspiciousandusefulitems.

19 JANUARY - FEAR

Fear is a great human curse. It is your worst enemy. Fear assumes many forms and blights many lives. But a calm mind brings courage. Then you will face the trials and difficulties of the spiritual path without fear, Fearlessness is a divine quality. What is fear? It is an imaginary zero; it is maya's deception. It is a mental delusion. It is a negative modification that arises in the mind-lake when one forgets his real, divine nature. It is a whirlpool that emanates from the chitta (mind) when one has lost his power of vichara (enquiry) and discrimination. It is the dark wave that proceeds from the ocean of antahkarana (mind) when one has intense attachment to the body.

Friends, there is nothing to fear really. Fear is due to acceptance of suggestion. Victory over fear really means victory over the thing that we fear. We attract to ourselves the very things we are afraid of. That is the universal law of nature. You need not be afraid of anything else in this world save fear itself.

Auto-suggestion helps a lot in removing fear. Assert the truth of being. Assert, "Nothing in the three worlds can make me afraid. I am absolutely fearless. My will is strong and irresistible." Make friends with the threatened experience, or the things you do not like. The raja yoga method is to repeat the formula: " I am courageous" or "OM courage". In the morning meditate on the virtue of courage.

The devotee's methodistopray to God with faith and sincerity and to make perfect self- surrender: "O God, makemefearless. Grant me the virtue of courage. O Mother take thy son in thy lap. Thou art fear;thouartcourage. Let me see thee alone in all these forms". Feel the invisible helping hand of theishtadevata (your own deity). Have strong faith. Real strength lies in fearlessness. Removefearofall sorts.

The vedantic methodistoenquire: "Who am I?" Identify yourself with the inner self. Assert: "I am the embodimentofcourage - I am immortal atman - I am not this perishable body. Who is to fear whom when allthisisthe self?" This will destroy fear to its very root. How peaceful and strong are they whohavevictory over fear. May we all shine in divine glory, radiating courage all around. May the divinesplendour, the brahmic aura shine in all faces and remove the darkness of fear, ignorance andterror.May we all attain that state of absolute fearlessness - brahmi sthiti (the state of Brahman).Maywe become one with the fearless Brahman.

20 JANUARY - BE COURAGEOUS

Man creates trouble andmiseryforhimself.Giveupallsortsoffears.Standuplikealion.Draw courage from within. Therearemanypeoplewhoaresotimidthattheywillnotmovearoundat night. Even when they seeacatatnight,theytremble.Whatashame.

They are embodiments oftimidity.Theyare'moustacheladies'.Therearesomesanyasins (monks) who repeat: "SHIVOHAMSHIVOHAM"("IamSiva")–buttheytremblewithfearwhen they are put to a little test.Theyperspireandquiverwhenthereisanyimpendingdanger!

They are poor, miserablespecimens.Ialwayssaythatadacoitcanbecomeagood Vedantin,ifhis energy is turnedinaspiritualdirection,becauseheisabsolutelyfearlessandhasnodeha adhyasa, (feeling"Iamthebody");butnotatimidman.

Fearlessnessisthegreatestqualificationforaspiritualaspirant.Allfearsareimaginary.Theyhave no real basis.Whenyouthinkseriouslytheywillmeltawaylikesnowbeforethesun.Thinkatiger or a lion hascomeinfrontofyou,andyouwillhavetofaceit.Thinkthatyouareplacedinfront of a machinegun,andthatyouwillbeblownuprightnow.Drawcouragenow.Thinkoftheverses of the secondchapteroftheBhagavadGita.Theydealwiththeimmortalityofthesoul.Againand again thinkofthedivineversesoftheAvadhutGita.Youwillbecomecourageous–though perhaps notallatonce.Graduallyyouwillfindthatyouaregainingcourage.

Constantlythinkthatyouaretheatman,theself.Youwillgraduallydevelopgreatcourage.Worry and fear arefearfulforceswithinus.Theypoisonthesourcesoflife;theydestroyallharmony, vitality andvigour.Thoughtsofcheerfulness,joy,andcouragearehealingandsoothing.

Just as darknesscannotexistinthepresenceoflight,soalsofearcannotexistinthepresenceof self-denial orself-realisationorcourage.Exhibitundauntedspirit,intrepidityandmanliness. Make a strongresolve:"Iwilldieorrealisetheself”.Giveuptheideathatyouarethebody. Fearlessness is one important sign of a liberated being.

21 JANUARY - IMAGINARY OBSTACLES

Many people developworriesbyfalselyimaginingthattheyareinferior to others. The idea of inferiority or superioritybringstroubleandworries.Ideasofsuperiorityand inferiority are mental creations only they areillusory.

Differences are unreal.Neverthinkthatyouareinferiortoanybody.Never think that you are superior to anybody. Youwillbegintotreatotherswithcontemptwhen you think that you are superior to them. Removetheseideasfromyourmind.Theyarethecause of useless worry.

By constant meditationandconcentration,youwillhavetodivertthemind from worry. If you have contentment thenworrycanbeeasilydestroyed.Getridofallsorts of mental weaknesses, superstitions, false andwrongimaginings;fearandotherwrongsamskaras (mental impressions).

When desires arise inthemind,trynottofulfilthem.Gradually,byconstant practice, desires can be reduced. Then, ifyoustopallthedesires,youcanalsodestroyworry. In this way you will conserve your energy.

Now come imaginaryphobiasandfearsofallsorts.Energyleaksoutinthese directions also. Man thinks: "I will developpneumonia.Ihavealreadygotafeverandacough." He gets unnecessary fear in this way. Anydiseaseisintensifiedbythinkingaboutit.Anordinary ailment becomes severe by entertainingunnecessaryfear.

Another man is afraidofcriticism.Ifanymancallsyouadog,whydoyou become furious? You do not develop four legsstraightaway,doyou?Butnowyoubegintofight him. Your eyes become red, you retaliate. Youcallhimadonkey.Thenhegetsirritated.Hefights back and you both end up deadly enemies. Thisisnotgood.Practisevichara(enquiry)andyou will find that all this is nothing.

22 JANUARY - DON'T BE WEAK

Shyness is a greathindranceinlife.Itisaformoftimidityorlowfear.Almostallboyshavegot this weakness-andyetthisisafemininequality.Shynessmanifestswhenoneisinthewrong path. Every womanknowsthatthegoaloflifeisGodrealisation,andyetsheengagesherselfin sexual matters.Thiswrongactionmakeshershywhensheappearsbeforeanyman.

A shy boyormancannotexpresshisthoughtsboldly.Hecannotlookdirectlyintotheeyesof anotherman.Hecannotfreelyapproachanystranger.Ashymandoesnotgetonwellinbusiness or in theoffice.

Modestyisnotshyness.Itisdecencyorchastity.Thiscomesfrompolitenessandpolishof character.Thosewhoareshyshouldtrytotalkwithothersboldly.Theyshouldlookdirectlyat the faceofothers.Shynessisagreatweakness.Itshouldbeeradicatedquicklybycultivating courage.

Timidityisanotherweakness,duetofaintheartedness.Itisaformoffear,akintoshyness.Atimid man hasachicken-heart.Heisunfitforanypublicactivityandforanykindofadventurouswork.

A timidmancannotbecomesuccessfulinlife,hecannotdealboldlywithhiscustomersin business.Atimidmanisafraidoflosinghislife.Heismuchattachedtohiswife,childrenand property. He is afraid of public opinion.

A timid mancannottalkevenafewwordswithforceandemphasis.Soeradicatetimidity. Eradicate it by developing courage. For timidity is a curse - and it weakens a man.

Pessimismisatemperofmindthatlookstoomuchonthedarksideofthings.Itisthedoctrine in whichthewholeworldisbadratherthangood.Thisisverydepressing.Vedantinsare wonderfuloptimists.Thoughtheysaythattheworldisunrealandtheytalkondispassion,thisis to createadistastefortheworthlesslifeofthisworld,andtocreateatastefortheimmortal, blissful lifeinBrahman.

The oppositeofpessimismisoptimism.whichalwayslooksonthebrightside.

23 JANUARY - RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Carelessness and forgetfulness are two evil qualities that stand in the way of success for a man. Acareless man cannot do any action in a proper manner. These qualities are born of tamas (inertia). Application and tenacity are unknown to a man of carelessness. His superiors soon get displeased with a man who is careless and forgetful. There is a lack of attention in him.

Develop a strong desire to remove these two defects and to develop carefulness and a good memory. This is important. Then the will and the subconscious mind will do the work for you. Tie the key in your handkerchief as soon as you lock the door. Keep your money in the inside pocket. Keep your spectacles in the side-pocket. Always count the packages whenever you go out. Keep accounts regularly. Daily make a small note of items you have to attend to.

Many people are always diffident. They have no self-confidence. They have energy, capacity and faculties but they have no confidence in their own powers and faculties, in their ability to attain success. This is a kind of weakness that brings failures in all attempts.

A man appears on the platform to deliver a lecture. He is a capable man and he is well learned, but he is diffident. He foolishly thinks that he cannot produce an impressive speech. The moment this negative thought occupies his mind, he becomes nervous - he stutters and stammers. This failure is only due to his lack of self-confidence.

You may have little capacity and yet you must have full confidence that you will succeed in your attempt. There are people who have very little material and little capacity, and yet they thrill the audience. This is due to their confidence. "I will succeed", they say, or, "I am fully confident of my success".

Never leave room for the negative quality of diffidence to enter your mind. Know what your real worth is. A man of confidenceis always successful in all his attempts.

24 JANUARY - AIDS TO SUCCESS

Develop equal-vision.LiveinthetruespiritoftheBhagavadGita:"Sageslookequallyona brahmana (holyone)adornedwithlearningandhumility,acow,anelephant,adogandevenan outcast." Whereissuperiorityandinferioritywhenyoubeholdtheselfeverywhere?Changeyour angle of visionandrestinpeace.

The heart mustbebeautiful.Facethestormandtriumphoverit.Donotshrinkfromthebattleof life, but fightitandcomeoutvictorious.Faceabuse,insult,dishonour,disgrace,malicewitha smile on yourface.Becalmandserene.Takeupalleventsinlifeasthoughyouareasilentwitness, never beingperturbedatall.

Depressionisanevilquality.Peoplehaveplentyofmoney,andyettheyarealwaysdepressed. They put onamorose,peevishappearance.Theyarealwaysgloomy.Thisisadangerousepidemic disease. Thegloomymanspreadsgloomanddepressioneverywhere.Hecannotapplyhimselfto any kind ofwork.Heisidleandlethargic.

Depressionwilldepleteallenergy.Thinkofthevirtueofcheerfulness.Haveamentalpictureof joy and thehabitofcheerfulnesswilldeveloparoundthismentalpicture.Smileandlaugh.Give a smile to everybodyyoumeetontheroad.Thatmanwhoalwayskeepsacheerfulcountenance radiates joytoothers.

Some are notabletodecideanythingdefiniteincertainimportantmatters.Theyhavenotgot independentpowerofjudgement.Theysimplyprolongthematter.Theydonotcometoadefinite positive decision.Amanwhohasindecisionwillneversucceed.Hewillbefullofdoubtsandfears.

Procrastination isthefriendofindecision.Theopportunitywillslipaway.Itwillbetoolateto gather honey whenthewintercomes!Youmustthinkoverthematterforsometime.Thencome to a definite decision.Atonceyoumustapplyyourwillandtrytoputthematterintoexecution. Then only you willsucceed.

25 JANUARY - DESTROY THE ROOTS OF SUFFERING

Determinationandself-reliancearеverynecessaryforsuccessinself-realisation.IntheMundaka Upanishad youwillfind:"Thisatmancannotbeobtainedbyonewhoisdestituteofstrength,or without earnestness,orbypenancewithoutmark.Butifawisemanstrivesafteritbythose means, thenhisselfentersintoBrahman".

Fearlessnessisanimportantqualificationfortheaspirant.Youshouldbepreparedtorenounce your lifeatanymoment.Withoutrenunciationofthelittlesensuallife,theeternalspiritуallife cannotbeattained.Everydifficultythatcomesinthespiritualpathisanopportunitytogrow stronger and to develop will power.

Whenyouhaveoncedecidedtotakeupthespiritualpath,sticktoitatanycost,nay,attherisk of yourlife.Thouarttheimmortalself.Bebold.Standup.Girdupyourloins.Realisethetruth. Proclaim it everywhere.

Wrongthinkingistherootcauseofhumansuffering.Cultivaterightthinkingandrightaction. Thinkalways:"Iamtheimmortalself".Thisisrightthinking.Workunselfishlyforthepoor,but work only in terms of unity, with atma bhava (seeing. the one self in all). This is right acting.

Thereisnosuchthingassin.Sinisonlyamistake.Sinisamentalcreation.Thebabysoulmust commitsomemistakesduringtheprocessofevolution.Mistakesareyourbestteachers.Think always: "I am pure atman". Then the idea of sin will be blown in the air.

Do notsay,"Ohitiskarma,mykarma.Itismykarma(fate)thathasbroughtmetothis".No.Exert. Do tapas(penance).Concentrate.Meditate.Purify.Donotbe.afatalist.Donotyieldtoinertia. Do notbleatlikealamb.Roar"OMOMOM"likealion.

Adheretothedailyspiritualroutine.Applyyourselfwithzealandenthusiasmtosadhana(spiritual practice).Becomeanaisticbrahmacari(lifelongcelibate).Besteadyandsystematicinyouryoga abhyasa (practice of yoga).

Shine inyournative,pristineglory.Becomeajivanmukta(liberatedsage).Youarethechildrenof immortality and light. "TAT TWAM ASI - Thou Art That, my dear children.

26 JANUARY - THE GOLDEN MEDIUM

Some people are over-credulous. This is bad, as they are easily cheated by others. You must fully understand man. You must know his nature, his qualities and his antecedents. You must know his behaviour. Test him on several occasions and only place your confidence in him when you are fully satisfied.

He may be a deep man who puts on a false appearance and who turns out to be quite the reverse. Watch him closely, move with him closely and hear about him from several other people. Man cannot hide his nature for long. You will see that his face registers all his inner feelings and thoughts.

Too much suspicion is also bad. It is the opposite of over-credulousness. Mind always moves in extremes. The husband suspects the wife and the wife suspects the husband. There is always trouble in the house.

If the proprietor suspects his servants, then how can business go on? It cannot. The world runs on perfect faith. Business too runs on faith. If people are too suspicious there is always friction and rupture. Do not be over-credulous or over-suspicious. Keep the golden medium always.

Another undesirable quality is intolerance, or petty mindedness. All the restlessness and fighting in this world takes its origin from intolerance. An Englishman is intolerant towards an Irishman or a German. A Hindu is intolerant to a Mohammedan and vice versa. Arya Samajist is intolerant towards a Sanatanist and vice versa. All this is due to perfect ignorance.

How can a man, who sees the one atman in all, be intolerant? All these small differences are purely mental creations. Expand. Embrace all. Include all. Love all. Serve all. Behold the Lord in all.

See God in every face. Feel his indwelling presence in all. Be liberal and catholic in your views. Destroy the barriers that separate man from man. Drink the eternal, atmic bliss. Become perfectly tolerant. Forget and forgive.

27 JANUARY - ANGER

When you become angry leave the place immediately. Take a long walk; stay away for a half hour. Repeat the sacred mantra OM SANTI one hundred and eight times. You will find that your anger subsides. Another way is to count from one to thirty - your anger will subside. When anger tries to show itself, observe silence. Never utter a harsh word. Try to nip it off before it emerges from the subconscious mind.

You will have to be alert. It tries to come out so suddenly. But, before anger manifests in the mind, there is agitation in the mind. If you strive to subdue anger, then hatred subsides - but even then there may be slight impatience lingering there. Eschew this slight disturbance also. For a man who is leading a divine life, this is a serious drawback. Irritability is a weakness of the mind. Remove it by practising tolerance, mercy and love. Calmness is a direct means to the realisation of Brahman.

Keep the mind alwaysinbalance,intune. Close the eyes. Dive deep into the divine source. Feel God's presence. RepeatHisnameandremember Him at all times. You will gain immense spiritual strength. Meditate earlyinthemorning, before you mix with people. Then rise above the thousand and one thingswhichmight irritate you in your daily life. Then only you will live in harmony and concord. Thenonlyyouwill turn out wonderful work.

Man wastes much energy bybecoming angry, very often over little things. The whole nervous system is shattered and agitated.If this anger is controlled, by brahmacharya (purity), forbearance, love and vichara(enquiry), a man can move the whole world. Anger manifests so suddenly that it is difficult tocheckit.The impulses it generates are so powerful that he is swayed by them. Control anger. Controlthemind.

28 JANUARY - DESTROY JEALOUSY

There are three ways to destroy jealousy. One is by thinking - "The whole world, with all its enjoyments, wealth and luxury is illusory. What do I possibly gain by being jealous of another?" When anyone thinks seriously about this, several times a day, the vritti (thought or feeling) of jealousy slowly dies. This vritti of jealousy is deep-rooted. It is the root of all miseries.

The second way is to have the feeling of universal brotherhood. You are not jealous of your intimate friend or loving brother - because you have become one with them, and so you feel that all that belongs to them is yours. Do this with everybody. Love everybody as your own brother or friend. Then you will have no jealousy.

The third way to destroy jealousy, is a developed stage. Just repeat the formula, "I am the all" - "I am the all-in-all". Think that there is nothing but atman, your own self, everywhere. Jealousy will slowly vanish. You will experience infinite joy.

Man sees his own reflectioninall people but foolishly imagines that they are different from him and he fights with them. Hefights on account of feelings of jealousy and hatred.

Spiritual discernment is whatismost needed. Where there is duality, by virtue of ignorance, one sees all things as distinct fromthe self, the atman. When everything is seen as the self, then there is not even an atom other thanself. Duality is the root of misery. Realise non-dual consciousness and you will attain everlastingbliss.

Your attitude to the universeshould be the same as your attitude to your self. Man is a member of a great fraternity. Womanisthe counterpart of man. Without self-control the new world order can have no lasting strengthofcharacter. He who is pure and self-controlled is always peaceful. His life is always successful.

29 JANUARY - THE LAW OF BEING

Dharma (righteousness) is what a man ought to be. It is the law that man must follow for his own spiritual evolution. Sanatana Dharma - is the law of being and it is the religion of humanity. It is not a special privilege of the Hindu only.

Righteousness opens the way for God-realisation. The treasure of dharma is accumulated by plain living and high thinking.

Truth, austerity knowledge, sacrifice and consecration are the pillars on which dharma rests. These are the great, eternal laws that uphold the earth.

There are ten attributes of dharma. They are: patience or courage, forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity, control of the senses, thoughtfulness, knowledge, truthfulness and angerlessness.

Dharma assumes the shape of the moral law that differentiates between good and evil, that impels right action and not wrong action. The rightness or wrongness depends only on what will help or hinder a man's spiritual progress. Human existence has four values. They are: dharma - the ethical value of life; artha - the material value; kaama - the vital value; moksha -the infinite value.

No one can lead a life of adharma (unrighteousness) and be happy. This is because happiness is the nature of the atman and dharma too is an expression of the law of the self.

That which elevates you is virtue (dharma) and that which pulls you down is vice (adharma) or sin. That which helps you to attain Godhead is virtue. That which hurls you into the dark abyss of ignorance is sin, and that which leads you to illumination is virtue.

That which causes intoxication is sin and that which purifies the heart is virtue. That which gives you peace, joy, satisfaction, exhilaration, expansion of the heart is virtue and that which brings restlessness, dissatisfaction, depression and contraction is vice.

30 JANUARY - DHARMA

Dharma or righteousness is the gateway to God-vision. Righteousness is a means of climbing the difficult steps of the spiritual path. Dharma presupposes the knowledge of the truth. Divine life is dharma.

A perfectly moral and ethical life is dharma. Dharma is that which leads to the bliss of nirvana (the immortal being). Dharma is the way in which you have to divert your spiritual life to the supreme spiritual end.

Dharma controls the pulse of a nation and of the world. Dharma is what sustains a being in his evolution. Dharma or righteousness is religion in the highest sense of the term.

Dharma is the eternal law on which the universe rests, and by which the universe is governed. Welfare of mankind ultimately rests upon dharma. Righteousness is the highest wealth. It is the rule of life. In righteousness everything is established or rooted.

The main feature of dharma lies in refraining from doing unto others what one would not do unto oneself. Compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, self-restraint and tolerance are the ingredients of dharma. Tread the path of dharma and you will get happiness along with freedom. You can secure the real joy and glory of life.

That which helps you in your spiritual evolution is right. That which obstructs and hinders your spiritual evolution is wrong. That which leads to unity of self, is right. That which leads to separation is wrong. To do good to others, to serve and to help others, to give joy to others, is right. To give pain to others, to injure others, is wrong.

Do not do any act which injures another and makes you feel ashamed to do it. Do as you would be done by. Do unto others asyou wish others to do unto you. This is the secret of dharma. This is the secret essence of karmayoga. This will lead you to the attainment of eternal bliss.

31 JANUARY - RIGHT AND WRONG

'Right' and 'wrong'arerelativeterms.Theyvaryaccordingtotime,specialcircumstances,varna (caste), and asrama(stageoflife).Moralityisachangingandrelativeterm.Thepassionateman who molests hiswifefrequently,togratifyhisownpassionismoreimmoralthanamanwhovisits the house of awomanofillfameonceinsixmonths.Theman,whodwellsconstantlyonimmoral thoughts, is themostimmoralmanofall.

Do you clearlynotethesubtledifference?Tokillanenemyisrightforakingbut,abrahmana (priest) orasanyasin(monk)shouldnotkillanybody,eventoprotecthimselfintimesofdanger. He shouldpractisestrictforbearanceandforgiveness.Tospeakanuntruth,tosavethelifeofa mahatma(holyone),orone'sguru,whohasbeenunjustlychargedbyanunjustofficerofstate, is right.Inthisparticularcaseuntruthhasbecometruth.Tospeakatruthwhichbringsharmto many isuntruthonly.Tokillarobberwhomurderswayfarers,isahimsaonly.Himsa(violence) becomes ahimsa (non violence) under certain circumstances.

Even greatsagesarebewilderedsometimesinfindingoutwhatisrightandwhatiswrong.That is why LordKrishnasaysintheBhagavadGita:"Whatisactionandwhatisinaction?Eventhewise are hereinperplexed.ThereforeIwilldeclaretotheetheaction,byknowingwhichthoushaltbe liberatedfromevil.Itisneedfultodiscriminateunlawfulactionandtodiscriminateinaction. Mysteriousisthepathofaction.Hewhoseesinactioninaction,andactionininaction,heiswise among men.Heisharmoniousevenwhileperformingallactions."(ChapterIV,Verse16-18).

Rishi Kanada,authorofVaisesikaPhilosophy,saysintheopeningverse:"Thatwhichbrings supreme blissandexaltationisright.ThatwhichelevatesandbringsyounearertoGod,isright. That which bringsyoudownandtakesyouawayfromGod,iswrong.Thatwhichisdoneinstrict accordance withtheinjunctionsofthescriptures,isright.Thatwhichisdoneagainstthe injunctions of thescriptures,iswrong.Toworkinaccordancewithdivinewill,isright.Toworkin opposition to thedivinewill,iswrong".Thisisonewayofdefiningrightandwrong.

1 FEBRUARY - GOOD AND EVIL

The universe contains two dynamic forces. They are good and evil. Good and evil are twin forces, born of the same father. They are called dvandvas or the pairs of opposites. They have no independent existence. Evil exists to glorify good. This is its only raison d'etre. Evil is negative good!

Evil is a destructive force. Good is a constructive force. There is neither absolute good nor absolute evil in this universe. Evil has no independent existence apart from good. Wherever there is good, there is evil. You cannot expect absolute good in this relative world.

You can find absolute good in Brahman alone. From the viewpoint of the basic reality, which lies at the back of evil and good, evil and good dwindle into an airy nothing. Evil and good are only mental creations. Transcend good and evil, and reach the abode of supreme peace and immortality.

For a jnani, who has knowledge of the self, there is neither good nor bad. The ‘why' of evil can only be understood when you get atma-jnana (self-knowledge). Do not rack your brain now. This is a transcendental mystery which only Brahman knows. Finite intellect that is conditioned in time, space and causation cannot find out a solution to this problem of evil. When you are fully established in your self, then evil and good both vanish altogether.

Transmute evil into good by changing your mental attitude, or angle of vision. Out of evil, good often cometh. Destruction is necessary for regeneration, for renovation and for reconstruction.

Tamas (inertia) is evil. Satva (purity) is good. So convert tamas into satva. Then evil is transmuted into good. Selfishness is evil and selflessness is good. Lust is evil, brahmacharya (celibacy) is good. Greed is evil. Generosity, integrity, disinterestedness - all these are good. Pride is evil and humility is good.

2 FEBRUARY - GARDEN OF VIRTUE

Forgiveness is the greatestvirtuewhichshinesforthinallitssplendourinthedevotee.Courage and patience are the twinqualitiesofarealaspirant.Humilityisthehighestofallvirtues.God helps you only when youfeeltrulyhumble.Humilityisnotcowardice.Itismeeknessandnot weakness. Humility andmeeknessareindeedspiritualpowers.Makepatiencethystrength. Assert it. Feel it. Will it.

Non-attachment comesveryslowly.Itgivesanewsenseoffreedomandpeace.Angeristheworst fire. Lust is an all-consumingfire.Bothwillscorchyou.Extinguishthesefiresthroughloveand purity. Meditate. Think:"Iamthefearless,immortalsoul".Thenfearwillvanish.

True love is the greatestpoweronearth.Itruleswithoutaswordandbindswithoutacord.To love God is to love all.ToloveallistoloveGod.Spreadthemessageoflove.Practisecosmiclove. Love all. Embrace all.Bekindtoall.Thiswillremovejealousy,hatred,etc.Toloveallisthesecret of self-realisation andliberation.

The four fundamentalvirtuesarepatience,adaptability,kindspeechandpureconduct.Justice, temperance, courageandwisdomarealsogreatvirtues.Virtueisthegoldenkeywhichopensthe gate to the abode ofeternalbliss.

Cultivate divine virtuessuchaspurity,courage,humility,self-restraint,non-violencetruth,mercy, faith, etc. Be virtuous.Youareonthewaytowisdom.Inthegardenofyourheart,plantthelilyof love, the rose of purity,thechampakaofcourage,themandaraofhumilityandthelady-of-the- night of compassion.

Virtue is knowledge.Virtueisexcellence.Knowledgeistheripefruitofthefineflowerofvirtue. Think well. All saintsteachthatyoumustdogoodinthoughtandwordanddeed.Thisisthe principle of morality.

3 FEBRUARY - AN EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING VIRTUE

Examine your character. Pick up the defects you find in it, and find their opposites. Let us say that you suffer from irritability. The opposite of irritability is patience. Try to develop this virtue by meditating on the abstract virtue of patience.

Regularly, every morning, at 4 a.m. sit down in the lotus posture. Sit in a solitary place for half an hour - think of patience. Think of its values, think of its practice under provocation.

Thus, take one point each day. Think about that point steadily, without letting the mind wander. Think of yourself as perfectly patient, a model of patience. End the meditation with a vow that "This patience, which is my true self, I will feel and show, today and every day".

For a few days there may be no perceptible change. You may still show and feel irritability. But go on practising. You will see that soon, thoughts of patience will arise simultaneously with the irritable impulse and the irritation will be checked.

Go on practising. The irritable impulses will grow more and more feeble, until you find that irritability has disappeared and patience has become your normal attitude towards annoyance.

In this manner you may develop various other virtues, such as sympathy, self-restraint, purity, humility, benevolence, nobility and generosity.

Concentration of the mind on God, after its purification, gives real happiness and knowledge. You are born for this purpose only. Dive deep. The divine flame, the light of lights is burning there. Merge within. "You have passed through millions of wombs, You had countless births, You had countless fathers andmothers, You had numberless brothersand sisters, Millions of wives and children, And yet your desires havenotperished. You live to eat, drink andmakemerry. But birth is painful, deathispainful, all is painful. Listen to me brother - killpassion. Enthrone Lord Rama in yourheart Then sound the trumpetoftriumph – So says Sivananda."

4 FEBRUARY - MAN OF VIRTUE

He who is virtuous,whoiskindonalloccasions,andwhoisfilledwithcompassion,obtainsgreat contentment.Heascendsthesuperiorpathofvirtue.Harmlessness,forgiveness,peacefulness, contentment,agreeablespeech,controlofpassionsandexcitements,theserviceofvirtuous people,andactionsinaccordancewiththeinjunctionsofthesacredscriptures,constitutethe superiorpathofvirtue.He,whodailyworshipsthevirtuous,canreachtheeternalabodeof wisdom.

He whohasnolikingforwhatisagreeableandnodislikeforwhatisdisagreeable,whopractises self-restraint,whoregardspleasureandpainassame,whoinjuresnocreaturesanddestroysno life, heisconsideredgoodandvirtuous.

He whoisdevotedtothewell-beingofall,whosacrificeshisverylifeforothers,whohastruth for hisrefuge,whogivesbutdoesnottake,whohasmercy,whoadoreshiselders,godsand guests;towhomgoodconductisalwaysdear,andwhohasnofearofthenextworld-heis regarded as good and perfect.

Such apromoterofvirtuecannotbeseducedfromthepathofvirtue.Heisfearless,tranquil, serene,fullofmercy.Heisadoredbyallthegoodpeoplewherevertheyare.Suchamanisnot attached to worldly objects. Fear, lust, anger, restlessness and sorrow do not live in him.

Such apromoterofvirtueneverdeviatesfromrighteousness.Heisnotattachedtoanything.He is freefrompride.Heregardsallimpartially.HeholdsGainandloss,happinessandmisery,the agreeableandthedisagreeable,lifeanddeath,allinequalestimation.Oman,alwaysrespect such a good and virtuous person. Serve him. Seek instruction from him.

CanyouservelikeFlorenceNightingale?Canyouobeylikeasoldieronthebattlefield?Canyou begenerouslikeRantiDeva?Canyouspendsleeplessnightsindevotiontothe Lord,likeMira? Canyoudotapas(penance)likeDhruva?Canyousticktoyourconvictionslike Mansoorand ShamsTabriez?CanyoubefearlesslikethesagewhometalexandertheGreat,onthebanksof the river Indus?

If youcansay,'Yes',toallthesequestions,youwillhaveself-realisationthisverysecond.Youwill havecontactwithavataras(divineincarnations)andfull-blownyogis,thisverysecond.First deserve and then desire.

5 FEBRUARY - TRUE LOVE OF GOD

My child, you have beenextremelyfortunateingettingthishumanbirth. Have intense devotion to God and communewithHim.Kindlethelightdivinewithinyourheart and maintain its flame of devotion throughyourconstantremembranceoftheLord.Itistrue devotion that counts; it does not matterwhichdeityyouworship.

The marksofdevotionarelove,faith,confidence,humility,service. God accepts all forms of prayer andworshipthrough,whichmanexpresseshisloveanddevotion for Him. Bhakti or devotion isthenaturalaffinitybetweenthedevoteeandtheLord.

As iron thatistouchedbythetouch-stoneturnstogoldatonce,as the water of the roadway mixed withthatoftheGangesbecomespureatonce,evensotheheart of the devotee, though greatly soiledbymanygreatsinsbecomespureifattachedwithdevotion to the Lord.

To removetheafflictionsandsorrowsofthedevotees,givesthegreatest happiness to the Lord. No evil cantouchthedevoteewhosedevotionissincere,andwhose faith is genuine. Put your little seedoffaithinyourheart,wateritwithloveanddevotion.Then the great tree of bhava samadhi (theculminationofdevotion)willgrow.

The companyofdevoteesisapricelessasset.Itinvigoratesthemind. It is only through God's grace that manfeelsthedesiretobeinthecompanyofsaints.Adevotee does every action for the sake of theLord.Hehatesnone,helovesGodonly.Hewhoisinternally and externally pure, compassionate,truthful,forgiving,freefromlikesanddislikes,andis given to investigating the truth about God,isarealdevotee.

6 FEBRUARY - LOVE ALL

Love is happiness. Loveislife.Loveisenergy.Loveis immortality. Love is wisdom. Love never fails. Love is success. Loveisvictory.Loveiseternalsunshine. Love alone creates and unites.

Love is the movingprincipleofallformsoffellowship. When you realise your oneness with a man, you can really lovehimwhole-heartedly.Theworld can only be united for common welfare through unselfish,pure,divinelove.

Love dissolveshatredandanimosity.Lovepromotes understanding. To love all as one loves oneself, is thesuccinctstatementofdharma.Universal love is the mark of saintliness. Without love there isnolife.

God residesinallcreatures.Godisimmanentinall forms. Therefore love all. Be compassionate to all creatures.ThisgivesthegreatestjoytoGod. Love all in the one love divine. Modern civilisationiscomplicatedandartificial.Simplefolk live in a world of love and peace. Let no one hate anotherorharmanother.

Look not atthedefectsofyourneighbours.Lookat your own shortcomings and imperfections. Love one another.Whentheseprinciplesgovernan individual's life, then man is happy, peaceful and joyful.

Love is thebasisofallrealandpermanenthappiness, of all real and permanent peace. Love is the supremegift;itisthegreatestthingintheworld. Love never fails. Perfect love casts out fear. Love lendsimpetusandincentivetolife.Itmakesone daring, courageous and strong.

Love makesonegenerous,unselfish,patient,merciful and forgiving. Love discloses the sublimest meaning andpurposeoflife.Lovemakesonehave good-will towards his neighbour, loyalty towards hisfriends,anditgivescompassionforthe enemy.

To love is tosuffer.Loveandsufferingalwaysgotogether.

7 FEBRUARY - HOW TO ERADICATE HATRED

No samadhi(unionwithGod)ispossiblewhenhatred,prejudice,jealousy,anger,lust,etc., exist in the mind.Removethesedefectsbylove,endurance,contemplationoftheinfinite,vision of the self, goodcompany,andenquiry.Loveisthegreatestpoweronearth.Compassionisthegreatest sadhana (spiritual practice).

Karuna(compassion)istorelievepainwhereitisandnottogivepaintoothers.Hewho gives charitytoapoorman,givesittohimself.Forthereisnothingelsesavehisownselfintheuniverse. He whohurts,hates,abuses,anotherman-hehurts,hatesandabuseshimselfonly.

Whenthoughtsofhatredandrevengeariseinthemind,trytocontrolthephysicalbody and speechfirst.Donotutterevilandharshwords.Donotcensure.Donotinjureothers.Ifyou can do thisforseveralmonths,thethoughtsofrevenge,havingnoscopeformanifestingoutside, will die ofthemselves.

Constantvichara(enquiry)anddevelopmentoftheoppositevirtuesofprema,daya,karuna (that is-love,compassionandsympathyorcommiserationwilleradicatethesetwoviolentpassions. Servethemanyouhate.Sharewithhimwhatyouhave.Givehimsomethingtoeat.Prostrate to himsincerely.Yourhatredwillsubside.Yourhatredwillleaveyou.Andhewillbegintolove you. Gifts and kind words tame the untamed man.

Serveall.ServetheLordinall.Respectall.Haveequalvision.Allkindsofhatredwilldisappear. Thesadhana(practice)ofequal-visionisextremelydifficultbutstrenuouseffortswillbring about successeventually.Aspirantswhowishtoabolishthedividingline,shoulddeveloplovefor a very dearpersonfirst.Afterthatheshoulddeveloploveforanindifferentperson.Thenafterthat, he should develop love for an enemy.

In doingthis,ineachcompartment,theyshouldmaketheheart tenderandloving.And this should immediatelyafterwardsinducemeditation.

8 FEBRUARY - A SAINT

God dwells inthosewhohavenolust,anger,pride,arrogance,delusion,greed,hatredand deceit. Asage realiseshisunity,hisspiritualonenesswithothers.Heseestheirsufferingand out of compassion,devotionandlove,hestaysontheearthplane-toserveandtosuffer for all creatures - until they become purified and attain illumination.

He isasaintwhohasconqueredthesenses,whoisendowedwithrighteousconduct,who speaks sweetwordseventothosewhoarecrookedbynature,andwhoseheartisalwayssoftened by tenderfeelingsforothers.Heisasaintwhohasshakenoffallattachments,whoisnever swayed by lust,greedoranger,whoisconstantlyestablishedinrighteousness,whoiswise, humble, modest and forgiving.

A saintiscompassionate-heisfreefromviolence,greed,hypocrisyandduplicity.He regards earthlyrichesaspoison.Asaintisforbearing.Hehasagenerousheartandpossesses great fortitudeanddiscrimination.Asaintisfreefromegoismandselfishness-heisliberated.

A saint istheonetobeworshipped.Heisaparamahamsa.Hehasshakenoffeverything. Each saint proclaimsthesametruth,buthisteachingsareadaptedtosuittherequirementsof his time and areaofinfluence.

He wholooksuponeverythingwithanequaleye,whoisperfectlycalmandserene,who does not covet anything,andwhoisthefriendofallheisarealsaint.

Sri Vasishta tellsRama:"Anacharya's(preceptor's)grace,ifitbecomesenrapport with his disciple, will ofitself,inamysteriousmanner,enablethediscipletoperceivedirectlythe Brahmic principle within,thoughitisimpossiblefortheguru topointtoBrahmanas'this'or'that', or for the disciple tounderstandhowitis,priortohisdirectperception.Eachshouldrecognize it within himself, throughhisownjnana(intuition)andwiththeaidoftheacharya(preceptor) and an understandingofthetruesignificanceofthemanyscriptures.Itisindeedveryraretoattain that state withoutthehelpofaguruandspiritualbook.Shouldallthreecombine-thatis,an acharya, jnana-sastra(scripturedealingwithself-knowledge)andatruedisciple,thenitiscertain that the seat beyondallbondagewillbeattained.

9 FEBRUARY – WAYTORADIANT HEALTH

This mysterioushumanbody,thetempleofGod,thenine-gated city of Brahman, is a marvellous palace fortheimmortalindweller,orsoul.Thebodyis a product of the prarabdha karma (the karma thatdeterminesthispresentlifeforthisindividual soul). It belongs to the jiva (individual soul) andthevirat(thephysicalworld)also.Thesumtotal of all physical bodies is virat purusha (the deitypresidingovertheuniverse).

The bodyisthemostmarvellousanddelicatemachine in the world. It is a highly complex mechanism.Eventhemosteminentdoctorsintheworld have not yet completely understood its structureandworking.Onevirulentmicrobecandestroy it in an instant. The body is surrounded on all sidesbyenemies-andyetmanlives.Thisisavery great mystery. This is due to the grace of the Lord.Theforceofprarabdhaprotectsandnourishes it.

A spermatozoan,whichisamillionthpartofadrop,and an ovum, joined together, give rise to the formationofthisbody.Whatagreatmystery.That subtle essence, which is the source for this, that whichsustainsthese,isthyownself.Thatistruth. That is soul. Thou art that.

Realise this andfreeyourselffromthecageofboneand flesh. The growth of the body, with all its limbs, organs, etc.,fromthistinyspeckofsperm,proclaims the omnipotence of the Lord.

God is that wonderfularchitectwhohasbuiltthiswonderful body-palace. The architect of this marvellous body hasshownthegreatestskill.Heisthe architect of all architects. The arches of buildings are nothingwhencomparedtothearchesof the body, which are a few fragile bones, joined together toformthearchofthefoot,whichsupports the weight of the body. One tiny nerve moves the musclesoftheface.Thefacethenexpresses the emotions of the mind - what a grand marvel! Lookatthatdelicateorganoftheeye.One small aperture which allows a mountain to enter! This greatestarchitectistheLordwhodwells in the chamber of your heart. Glory to him. Prostrations tothisgreatarchitect.

10 FEBRUARY - WAY TO RADIANT HEALTH

Health is joy. Healthiswealth.Healthistheelixiroflife.Without health life becomes a burden. Nature tries tokeepushealthy,butwebringonsicknessby continuous violation of the laws of nature. Naturallawsarerelentless.Thereisnomercy.

In the animalkingdomthereisseldomanysicknessbecause animals do not violate the laws of nature. Beforetheageofmachinery,man'slifewasmorenatural. Persons of the past generations were muchstrongerandhealthier.

Life in thetwentiethcenturyisbecomingmoreandmore artificial. Hence there is much deteriorationinhealthandstrength.Inspiteoftheinnumerable doctors and the latest medical discoveries our health is still deteriorating.

"A soundmindinahealthybody",asthesayinggoes.Themind controls the body, so try to keep your mindascheerfulaspossible,underallcircumstances.A strong mind wards off ill-health and it also helpsustopreservegoodhealth.

Run in theopenair.Wearsimple,lightclothing.Takeonlysimple, light, nourishing food. Do not go to doctors.Endeavourtoqualifyyourselfasyourowndoctor. Take lots of exercise. Take sun baths andcoldbaths.Inhaleozone.

Observemoderationinfood,drinkandcopulation.Leadapious life. Develop right thinking, right feeling,rightspeaking,rightaction,rightbelief,rightknowledge, right conduct. Do not employ servants. Rely on yourself in all things.

If you wantradianthealth,returntonature.Thenyouwillhave a blooming face and a charming personality.Availyourselfofallthehealingagenciesinnature. Avail yourself of the healing propertiesofthesun,thewater,theair,theearth,fasting,herbal plants and so on.

Observe thelawsofnatureinallthings.Eat,drink,sleep,think, conduct yourself in the way laid down by theancientsages.

11 FEBRUARY - SECRET OF LIVING

Disease is not a condition that ought to frighten you. It is not brought about by agencies outside yourself. Disease is the result of the kickings of life. Health alone exists. It is life alone that makes a man live. Disease is only a sign of health. It is the reaction of life to the entry of foreign matter into the system.

Life's cleansing process is called disease. There is only one disease and that is dis-ease, or no-ease. This means it is the struggle of life to get rid of foreign matter. This disease ought not to be suppressed with toxic drugs. Leave nature to get rid of it in her own way.

The first and foremost aid is fasting. Digestion of food is one of the greatest charges on the vital economy. If you put food into the stomach during disease, the vital power - which is in the process of cleansing the system of foreign matter - is diverted from its function and is made to digest the food! The only result is a worsening of the condition.

Food does not maintain life. Life eats the food and produces the energy necessary for its digestion and elimination. That is all. Life lives by itself. Food is necessary only for life to build and repair the body.

Satvic (pure) food such as fruits, vegetables, whole cereals, nuts, green leafy vegetables and milk, nourishes the body and helps life. It does not need to be eaten with appetisers, which act as aeroplanes to carry the food to the stomach, since such food is not demanded by the life-fire within.

This life-fire is God Himself. Man should wait for the appearance of this God within and only then offer Him some food. But nowadays people mistake the cravings of the palate for hunger. Perhaps hunger is a joy they have never experienced.

Real hunger, as it is in the form of the Lord Himself, is indescribable in its nature, even as God Himself is. To know this, one has to experience it. One cannot be told by another.

12 FEBRUARY - SEE GOOD IN ALL HEALING AGENTS

Brahman or the eternal is infinite. His expressions are also infinite. Allopathy, homeopathy, hydropathy, chromopathy, electropathy, naturopathy, ayurveda, unani - all are his manifestations. All these systems differ. Temperaments also are different, so are natures. Therefore different systems of treatment suit people of different natures.

It is only the prejudiced man who says, "Oh, allopathy is useless - homeopathy is the best system". Or, "Nature cure is good and ayurveda is bad". For some people ayurvedic medicines are good, for some unani medicines are good, and so on.

Sun's rays, water, herbs, green leaves, steam, mud - all are medicines. They are all products of nature. Only the names are different. The very fact that different systems exist shows that there is something good in each.

Even atoms, molecules and corpuscles have their loves and hates, likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions, affinities and non-affinities. Everybody has his own whims and fancies, his own eccentricities.

A naturopath hates and condemns an allopath. An allopath dislikes naturopathy. But a large-hearted doctor, a man with equal-vision and tolerance, who has practical knowledge of vedanta, can find good in every system. He can appreciate the beauty of variety of divine expression. He can behold unity in diversity and thus use every system to the best advantage.

Every system has its own advantage and bright side. Every system has come from the one divine source. Do not fight with one another. Do not try to prove the superiority of your system.

Take the good in everything. Be tolerant. Become wise and happy. Lead a healthy life. Attain God-realisation through the instrument of the body - the healthy, strong body.

If you have a powerful will and a strong power of endurance, then you will not feel pain. By constant thinking of disease, pain and trouble, you augment the suffering. Pain is in the mind. Atman is full of bliss.

13 FEBRUARY - WHO IS GOD?

God is the source of all light. God is the source of everything. He upholds the earth and the heavens. God is spirit. God is love. God is the source of all. God is the destroyer of ignorance. God is beyond all understanding.

God is the remover of all calamities. God is the granter of all prosperity. To the unenlightened man who depends on his senses for all final judgements, God remains unknown and therefore non-existent.

God is the one source of every action and every movement. God is the sustainer of all, the giver of all good and the bestower of all blessings. God is the eternal amongst fleeting things. He is the one in the midst of many. He is absolute consciousness.

God is the fulfiller of the desires of every man. The Lord is all-effulgence, divine, the fulfiller of desires and the granter of insight and intuition.
Who is God? God is God. He who is universal consciousness, who is eternal, who himself witnesses all that passes in every heart, who exists immutably throughout the universe and who is ever free, independent and immortal, is God.

Where is God? In his own glory. Seek him there. God has form and he is formless too. The Lord reveals himself even in a single leaf, in a blade of grass, in a drop of water.

God reveals himself only to the pure, the humble and the simple. He is the first and the last, the manifest, and the hidden. God cannot be defined. He has to be felt, seen, realised and lived in. Religion is the link between God and man. Every religion establishes a relation between man and God. Religion should give shelter even to the worst type of sinner. It must be perfectly tolerant, broad-minded and catholic.

The essence of religion is love. There is only one religion and that is the religion of love divine, which transcends all creeds and all scriptures. Behold the one essence in all. Love all.

14 FEBRUARY - WHAT IS RELIGION?

Religion is the veryfoundationofcivilisation in all its aspects. It is an applied science that takes man to his highestgoal.Religioncomprisesof non-injury, self-control and austerity.

Religion triestobringyoutoGodandtomake you divine. Its purpose is to release the ultimate values of life-thetranscendental-truth,beauty, goodness and love.
Religion is adynamicforce.Itisboththescience and the art of life. Religion is not merely life-transcending,itislife-transforming.Itisaprocess of purification and transformation.
Know thyselfandbefree.Religionteachestolerance and peace. Religion is essentially an eternal going out insearchofcompleteness,fullness, and wholesomeness.
Believe in theexistenceofGodandlifehereafter. Believe in right conduct, unconditional surrender toGod,meditationandunionwith God. These are all the essentials of religion. The union of theindividualsoulwiththedivinesoul, the lover with the beloved - this is true religion.

Religion laysdownthelawsoflife.Religion teaches us how to live a divine life. Man cannot progress spirituallywithoutreligion,justas a tree cannot grow without manure and water. Religion is thesupportthathelpsustoclimb the steep and narrow ladder of emancipation. It is the most importantfactorthathelpstheearnest student to understand the principles of oneness - the onenessoflifeanduniversallove.

We can attaineternalbliss,immortalityand everlasting peace by attaining God-realisation. All religions admitthis,unanimously.Thisisessential to all religions.
To realise God,oneshoulddevelopuniversal love. One should have ethical perfection, self-restraint, thespiritofself-sacrifice,goodconduct, devotion to saints and to God. One should study the holyscripturesandhaveperfectfaith in the existence of God, in the scriptures and in the words oftheguru.Allreligionsadmitthis unanimously. This is essential to all religions.

15 FEBRUARY - ESSENTIALS ARE SAME

The essentials or fundamentals of all religions are the same. Only non-essentials differ. 'The Noble Eightfold Path' corresponds to 'The Sermon on-the Mount' of Lord Jesus, and to the practice of sadachara (right conduct) of the Hindus. Every religion shows the correct path to God-realisation.

Every religion emphatically declares: "One can attain eternal bliss, immortality (God-realisation). To do this one must speak the truth, observe purity or self-restraint, love others, and practise concentration and meditation."

An intolerant man cannot attain God-realisation. As his intellect becomes clouded on account of intolerance, he cannot grasp the truth. All prophets are the messengers of God. They are great yogis who have divine intuitive perception of God. Their words are infallible and sacred.

Had it not been for these prophets and their writings, there would be no hope for the salvation and betterment of man. Each prophet helped mankind by the dissemination of knowledge and the founding of the religion, which would be most suited to the people amongst whom they flourished. Glory to these prophets and their writings. May their blessings be upon you all!

Beloved Friends! Behold the unity or oneness of all religions. He who knows the truth, who has grasped the essence of all religions, will never again enter into heated debates.

Realise your identity and intimate relationship with all beings - with ants and dogs, with elephants and tigers, with Muslims and Jews, with Hindus and Christians. There is only a degree of difference in manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman.

May you all live happily, with one heart! May you all understand the essential unity of all religions!

May the blessings of all the founders of all the religions be upon you! May you all attain God-realisation in this very life!

OM PEACE! OM PEACE! OM PEACE!

16 FEBRUARY - BIRTH AND DEATH

Birth and death, bondage and freedom, pleasure and pain, gain and loss - all are mental creations. Transcend the pairs of opposites. You were never born, you will never die. Thou art the immortal self always, O Prem. Thou art ever free from the three periods of time. It is the physical body that goes and comes. The self is all-full, all-pervading, infinite and partless.

Recognise, O Prem, that you are the living truth. Realise that you are always inseparable from the one essence that is the substratum of all these illusory names and forms. Get yourself firmly established in Brahman. Nothing can disturb you now. You have become invulnerable. Feel this through intuition when you enter into deep samadhi (the supreme silence), my child.
The god of death will tremble before you now. By your command the sun shines, the fire burns and the wind blows. Thou art beyond time, space and causation. Just as the clouds hide the sun, so also the darkness of ignorance, the clouds of the vasanas (mental conditioning) and egoism, are hiding the jnana surya (sun of wisdom) that is ever shining in the chambers of your heart. Through meditation and attainment of self-knowledge (atma-jnana) you will dispel the dark clouds of ignorance. Now you will shine in Brahmic splendour and glory. Proclaim this truth everywhere.

You must not be afraidofmaya(illusion) now. She is under your perfect control. Stand firm like yonder rock. Be adamantine.Nowmove about in the world like a lion. Now go and lift up the young struggling soulsoutofthemire of samsara (worldly life).

Disseminate knowledgeoftheself.Love all. Be kind to all. Expand thy heart. Have space in thy heart for all, even for themanwhois trying to poison you.
Do not come under theinfluenceof sudden impulses. Do not be carried away by the force of emotions, no matter hownoblethey may be. Be ever vigilant. Be ever diligent. Be not troubled. Be not anxious. Be notidle.Waitcoolly. You are bound to succeed. Develop courage by feeling you are the atman. Denythe"Iamthe body" idea. Practise meditation.
All difficulties will cometoanend.You will enjoy unalloyed bliss.

17 FEBRUARY - LIFE AND DEATH

Deathisonlyaprocessbywhichlifeiscontinued.Deathisnotannihilation of the self. Hence do not beafraidofdeath.Deathisforthebetter;itisablessing.Therefore grieve not. Life is impossiblewithoutdeath.Deathisjustanotheraspectoflife.Untiltheproper time comes, one's deathdoesnottakeplace,howeverseriousthediseaseoraccidentmay seem. When the right time comes, then one can die by the edge of a straw!

Lifeisalightningflashofbreath.Timeisbutathunderclapofdeath.Thedoctrine of reincarnation is indeedagreatsolacetohumanityinsofarasitshowsawayoutfrom eternal damnation in hell.

Whenthelustforlifeceases,nofurtherrebirthwilltakeplace.Onepower works through all hands,seesthroughalleyesandhearsthroughallears.Allhumanityis one in substance. The samefleshandthesamebloodformthebodyofanAmerican,anEnglishman, an African and an Indian.Theinstinctsandlongingsarecommontoallcreatures.Thisindicates the oneness of all forms of life.

Experimentshaverevealedlifeinstone,inwoodandinminerals.Theyhave established the unity of consciousnessortheunityofalllife.Prana(energy)isthedrivingpower of the world. Force is energy. Spiritualforceisthesavingpower.Itisthegreatestofallforces.It can control all physical and mental forces.

Physical scienceisobjectiveandhencecannotleadtoabsolutetruth.There is a soul behind mind and nature andwill.Soulisthedivineessence.Theconceptionoftheunity of God is the pivot around whichallotherdoctrinesrevolve.Noreligion,nonation,noscheme or reform, nor plan for the futureoftheworld,willendure,ifitisnotbasedongenuinefaith in God. We all belong to one and thesamefamily,tooneandthesamehouse,thatoftheSupreme Lord - the creator, the nourisherandthesustainer.

When you lookatatreeorashrub,aSikhoraMuslim,endeavourtobehold, behind the veil of form, the realhiddenconsciousness.Ifyoudothisforsometime,youwill feel inexpressible joy. All hatred willcease.Youwilldevelopcosmiclove,orunityofconsciousness. This will be a magnanimous experience.

18 FEBRUARY - GUIDE TO SADHAKAS

Be prepared to sufferanyamountof-pain.Haveasetofmaximswithyoualwaystoinduce vairagya (dispassion).Treatsensualenjoymentaspoison,asvomitedfood,asdungorurine.They cannot give you satisfaction.Preserveyourvirya(vitalenergy)carefully.Sleepalwaysseparately. Revere ladies as theMotherdivine.Rootoutthesexidea.Prostratebeforeall.SeeGodinevery face, in every thing.

Take to sankirtan(chanting),satsang(holycompany),prayerwhenthemindisoverpoweredby lower instincts.Faceobstaclescoollyandboldly.Carenotaboutcriticismwhenyouareinthe right path. Yieldnottoflattery.Respectevenroguesandscoundrels-servethem.Admityour faults plainly. Takecareofyourhealth-donotneglectdailyasanaandotheryogaexercises.Be active and nimblealways.

Develop yourheartbygiving.Beextra-ordinarilycharitable-givemorethanone'sexpectations. Desires multiplymiseries.Developcontentment.Controlthesensesonebyone.Develop brahmakaravritti("IamBrahman"idea)byrepeatedthinking.Haveacheckoverallyourthoughts keep thempureandsublime.Donotloseyourtemperwhenanyoneinsultsyouortauntsor rebukes you.Itisamerevarietyofsounds-amereplayofwords.RestyourmindinGod.Livein the truth.Beupanddoinginthepathofperfection.

Have a definiteaiminyourlifeandproceedtowardsitcautiously.Thebenefitsofmauna(silence) are incalculable.Nevergiveupthispractice.Therearefourimportantmeansforpassiontoenter the mind - sound,touch,sightandthought.Bevigilant!Haveintimateconnectionwithnonebut God. Mix little withothers.Bemoderateinallthings-extremesarealwaysdangerous.
Every day have self-analysisandintrospection.Knowtheextentofyourgrowth.Giveup curiosities in the spiritual path.Conserveyourenergyandconcentrate.Thinklittleofthefood, body, relatives. Think more oftheatman.YoumustrealiseGodinthisverybirthitself.

19 FEBRUARY - RENOUNCE

Go wherever you like. Go to Kashmir, to Darjeeling, to Vienna or the Alps, you will not find any real rest.

The charming scenery may soothe the retina for a few seconds but raga (attraction), dvesha (aversion), jealousy, passion and greed are everywhere. You will find the same earth, the same sky, the same air, the same water everywhere. You carry the same mind with you everywhere. Imagination and change of place have deceived many people. Be contented. Live wherever you like - but discipline the mind and the-senses, ceaselessly. Meditate on the inner self (antar-atman) ceaselessly. Here you will find everlasting peace. The mind will stop deceiving you now.

If you do not have sustained vairagya (dispassion), you will find no improvement or progress in spirituality. Vows, austerities, energy and meditation will leak out like water from a cracked pot.

You have spent eight hours in sleep and the rest in idle gossiping, telling lies, deceiving others, in selfish activities and in gaining money. How do you expect any spiritual good?

How do you expect immortality if you do not spend even half an hour in the service of God, in singing His name and in divine contemplation? Is there pain or is there pleasure in this world? If there is pleasure, why do young educated men retire to the forests? If there is pain, why do young men run after wealth, position and women?

Ah! Mysterious is maya (illusion). Mysterious is moha (delusion)! Try to understand the riddle of life and the riddle of the universe. Acquire viveka (wisdom). Have satsang (holy company). Enquire into the nature of the atman.

Study the Yoga Vasishta and the Upanishads. Then you will have a comprehensive understanding of the problems of life. There is not one iota of happiness in this world.

Renounce this world. Renounce the desire for moksha (liberation). Renounce renunciation itself. Then you will become that.

20 FEBRUARY - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

What is divine life? To shed the animal in man and to sublimate the human in him to the divine; to express the sublimation in his daily life, in his hourly life, in thought, word and deed. That is divine life.

To pray, to do japa (repetition of God's name), to sing His glory, to do kirtan (chanting), to meditate
on the Lord, is divine life.

Treat all kinds of work, domestic, official, etc., as service of God. Surrender all your actions and their fruits to the Lord. Give up agency. Feel you are an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Actions will not bind you. Your heart will be purified. The grace and light of God will descend on you.

This is the way to spiritualiseallyouractions.SeeGodinall beings and things. See the world as a manifestation of God. Itisnotnecessarytoabandontheworld in order to have a vision of God, because the world itselfisamanifestationofGod.

Listen! Wake up now.Developdispassion.Dosadhana(spiritual practice). Beware of the senses. Become desireless.

Understand life.Livedivinely.Seekgoodcompany.Fearnot. Waste not time. Depend on God. Spiritual disciplineisthekeytoGod-realisation.Disciplinethe body and the senses and the mind. May you attainGod-realisationnowandhere.

Be regular inkeepingyourspiritualdiary.Spiritualprogress will be greatly quickened. Kindly be regular in sendingmeacopyofyourdiaryattheendof each month for review and further instructions.Iamimmenselypleasedtonoteyourregularity in sadhana.

Go to bed early(10p.m.)andgetupearly(4a.m.).Theearly morning hours are most favourable for meditation.

Understand life'ssupremepurpose.Seektheeternal.Realise the underlying essence. Have intense thirst forliberation.Dietolive.Disciplinethemind. Have self-control.

Learn to be wise.Makethebestuseofthishumanbirth.Realise the oneness of existence.

21 FEBRUARY - EPISTLEOF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Serve untiringly. Serve selflessly. Pray devotedly.Live truthfully. You will soon enter the kingdom of God.

Remain cheerful. Do japa whole-heartedly. Rejoice heartily. You will attain the state of blessedness.
Reflect ceaselessly. Meditate intensely. Realise perfectly. Rest peacefully.

Think rightly. Act righteously. Meditate regularly. You will attain eternal bliss. Aspire fervently. Pray sincerely. Introspect seriously. Reflect vigorously. You will enjoy supreme peace.

Speak sweetly. Speak softly. Speak lovingly. Speak truthfully. You will attain unalloyed felicity.

Never leave your sadhana (spiritual practice), your meditation, even for a day. Constant practice and eternal vigilance are indispensable, till God-realisation is attained.

As long as you do not realise the truth, practise self-control and meditation. Conscious attempts to unite oneself with God, is called spiritual sadhana.
Subjugate the senses. Slay this egoism. Curb the mind and enter the illimitable domain of immortal bliss.
Om Krishna.

Faith creates, faith heals, faith works wonders, faith moves mountains.

Faith is the secret light for finding God. Faith makes the weak strong and the timid brave. Faith makes the impossible possible. Therefore, have unflinching, perfect faith in the Lord.
Please remember always that renunciation is the essence of spirituality and the secret of self-realisation. Renunciation is getting rid of egoism, desires and cravings.
Renunciation is the only way to perfection and bliss eternal. Renunciation leads to complete unification with the supreme being.
Renounce and be free.

22 FEBRUARY - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Dharmaisthepivotoflife.Dharmameansduty,righteousness,religion,eternallaw. Where dharma is, there victory is.

Dharmasupportslife.Dharmabringsperfection.Dharmaisawayoflifebasedonvirtues and perfect moral conduct. Dharma bestows immortal bliss.
Controlofthemindisthefirststeptospirituality.Victoryoverthemindmeansvictory over the world. Conquest of the mind is the greatest victory.
Themindbecomesunstableandrestlessthroughdesiresforobjects.Whenthemind is not centredintheatman,mandesiresobjects.Becomedesireless,controlthemind,behappy for ever.

Satsangaisassociationwithsaintsandsages.Withoutsatsangathemindcannotbe turned towards God.

Satsangaisaformidableandimpregnable-fortresstoprotectaspirantsfromthetemptations of maya(illusion).Liveinthecompanyofsages,heartheirvaluableinstructionsandfollow them implicitly.

Godislove.Bhaktiistheexperienceofdivinelove.Doyourdutyinaspiritofworship. Perform all actionsinanattitudeofprayer.

Yourheartshouldoverflowwithdivineloveatthesightofanyobjectinthisworld.Then alone you will become an ideal devotee.
BhaktiisdevotionuntotheLord.Prayer,japa(repetitionofGod'sname),kirtan(chanting), remembrance,worship,meditation,self-surrenderarealllimbsofbhaktiyoga.Bhakti yoga is suitableforthevastmajorityofpersons.Para(supreme)bhaktiandjnana(self-knowledge) are one.

23 FEBRUARY - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

God is very close to you. He abides in your heart. Closer is He than the breath; nearer than hands and feet! He is your very self or atman. Strive to know God. Seek the company of sages. Lead a life of selfless service, renunciation, dispassion, prayer and meditation.

Have self-conquest. Control the mind. You will attain perfection and peace. The divine grace is life's greatest treasure. If there is self-surrender, there is the inflow of grace. Lord's grace will descend in proportion to the degree of surrender The more the surrender, the more the grace.

Supreme love comes only by the grace of God. Grace of God will make you stick to the spiritual path.

Japa is the-recitationofLord'sname.Japais an Important sadhana (practice) for God-realisation. Japa yoga istheeasiest,safestandsurestway of attaining the goal in the present age.
Repeat 200malas(rosaryof108beads)ofjapa daily. Do more mental japa. Practice of japa brings the devoteefacetofacewithGod.
Japa yoga istheyogaofrecitationofamantra (or name of the Lord). There is a mysterious power in every nameoftheLord.Anameormantra is recited in three ways, viz. verbal or loud utterance, semi-verbalorhumming,andmental.Mental japa is more powerful.

Let therecitationofjapabecomehabitual. Do purashcharana - do one lakh (one hundred thousand)ofjapaforeachletter(ofthemantra). Live on milk and fruits. Observe brahmacharya during thisperiod.

Prayerisnotasking.Itistheyearningofthe soul for communion with God. Sincere prayer draws the graceoftheLord.Prayerisamightyspiritual force. It should spring from the bottom of your heart.

Pray sincerely,fervently,whole-heartedly.Then alone will God listen to your prayer.

24 FEBRUARY - EPISTLEOF SWAMI SIVANANDA

True and sinceresurrenderunto the Lord is theessence of bhakti (God-love).

"I am Thine.AllisThine
Thy will bedone,myLord."
This is thebestSharanagatiMantra or prayer (of self-surrender).
Seek His will.DoHiswill.Surrender to His will. You will become one with the cosmic will.

Hatha yogaismainlyconcerned with the physical body and the pranamaya sheath. It prepares the aspirantforrajayoga.
Hatha yogadealswiththepractice of asanas, pranayama, bandhas and mudras. It treats of sad kriyas too.Itgivessplendidhealth removes various sorts of diseases and awakens the kundalini. The practiceofyogaasanasbestows mental poise. If you practise asanas for even ten minutes daily, youwillderiveimmensebenefits. Be regular in the practice of asana - This is important. Sirshasanabestowsbrain-power and develops the intellect and the memory. It is useful in maintainingbrahmacharya(celibacy). It cures many diseases. Sarvangasana gives longevity and makes thespineelastic.

Be steadyinyourasana.Gradually try to sit on one asana for three hours at a stretch. Regulate and restrainthebreath,through the practice of pranayama (yoga breathing). Withdraw the senses fromtheobject.Nowyou will be able to practise concentration and meditation.

Regularity inthepracticeofconcentration is of paramount importance.

For successinbrahmacharya(celibacy) intensify your japa (repetition of God's name) and meditation.Keepupconstantmental repetition of the Lord's name, even during your work.

Have threesittingsformeditation - morning, evening and night, just before going to bed.

25 FEBRUARY - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Vairagya is dispassion, desirelessness or nonattachment. Vairagya liberates man from bondage. Vairagya is the foremost virtue. Look into the defects of sensual life. Live in the company of saints. You will develop vairagya. Vairagya is born of discrimination. It will help you and will be permanent. Without vairagya, not
even an iota of spiritual progress is possible.

Mind is the atma-shakti (power of self). It is the dividing wall between the individual soul and the supreme soul.

Mind creates this universe. It is the principle of thinking and sensation. It is a bundle of vasanas (habit patterns), thoughts, likes and dislikes. Slay the mind through destruction of the vasanas in Brahma-vichara and attain self-realisation.

Egoism is your arch enemy. It is born of ignorance. The real secret of divine life is only in the renunciation of this dire egoism.

The tree of egoism can be destroyed by the fire of wisdom only.

These are the ways to control the senses. Cultivate dispassion or non-attachment to objects; practise pratyahara (or withdrawal) and self-restraint.

Give up love or hate for objects. You can control the senses and the mind.

It is better to practise concentration on one form of God and to repeat one mantra (mystic formula). Concentration will thereby be greatly increased.

If the mind wanders bring it back again and again to the form. Practise a little pranayama (yoga breathing). It will steady the mind. Observe mauna (or silence) for two hours. It will conserve energy and produce more concentration.

26 FEBRUARY - EPISTLEOF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Behold! You must be diligent and vigilant always.Do not give leniency to the mind. Be regular in your meditation. Meditation is the very essenceand life of all spiritual sadhanas.

Meditate on the form of Lord Krishna with flutein His hand. Concentrate on Trikuti (the space between the eyebrows). Repeat mentally - Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

May Lord Krishna be your centre, ideal and goal.

Meditation is a sound and safe method by which you can unlock your inner power and attain God-realisation. When you are in meditation you will touch the level of cosmic consciousness in a flash of illumination.

You will know that life is eternal and that you are eternal. God is the only reality. God is the only truth. God alone exists. Know this, realise this. God is love. He dwells in your heart. Recite His name always. Sing His glories, Do kirtan (chanting). Conquer the whole world by truth and love.

In silence alone you can hold communion with God. When there is conflict of duty, sit and meditate. Hear the inner voice and act immediately. During meditation one enters into a half-sleepy state this is called tandra. If one is really meditating, his body will be light and his mind will be cheerful. If he is sleeping, the body will be heavy, the mind will be dull and the eye-lids will be heavy.

During deep meditation, you will forget the external world first and then the body. You will feel that there is no body. You will experience immense joy, indescribable peace.

Natural retention of the breath, without inhalation and exhalation, will come by itself. Meditate on a concrete form in the beginning. Meditate on any form of the Lord. Think of his attributes - omnipotence, purity, perfection, etc. Gradually the mind will be prepared to take up the higher, formless meditation.

Be patient. Be persevering.Cultivate burning dispassion, burning longing for God-realisation. Gradually you will enter intodeep meditation and samadhi.

27 FEBRUARY - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Meditation is freeing the mind from thoughts of sense objects. Mind dwells on God and God alone during meditation Have perfect ethical perfection. Then alone you will be established in deep meditation.

Meditation follows concentration and samadhi (superconscious state) follows meditation. • Be courageous. You will come across various obstacles in meditation. You will have to conquer sleep, distraction, a taste for sensual pleasure, laziness, etc.

Practise asanas regularly.

Do a little tratak (gazing) and pranayama (yoga breathing). Do vichara (enquiry) . Cultivate vairagya (dispassion), You will conquer all obstacles. • Samadhi is that state of pure consciousness, the supreme blissful state, where the jivatma (soul) becomes one with paramatma (supreme being).

Light diet, dispassion,discrimination,contact with a teacher, are necessary for the practice of meditation. Meditationwhenperishisted in and perfected brings about the experience of superconsciousness orsamadhi,theultimate state of self-awareness or realisation.

When there is tensioninthemind,when you cannot meditate, do kirtan or singing the Lord's name. You will get relaxationandconcentration. Kirtan is nectar. Kirtan is divine food for the soul Kirtan develops divinelove.Kirtanproduces bhava samadhi. (ecstasy of devotion).

Samadhi leads todirect,intuitiverealisation of the infinite. It is an inner divine experience, beyond the reachofspeechandmind.

A jnani or sage willalwaysbeinsamadhi, although engaged in worldly actions. One without full even-mindednesswillneverbeabletogo into samadhi even though he sits in padmasana for several hours. Whenallcravingscease,when one gets equal-vision, he attains jnana vision and Brahmic bliss.

28FEBRUARY-EPISTLEOFSWAMISIVANANDA

Spiritual experiencesdifferinsadhakas(seekers)according to the nature of their sadhana (practice) andtheyogatheyarepractising.Somehearanahat (mystic) sounds in the ear. Some see brilliantlights.Somehavevisionofrishis(sages),mountains, rivers, etc.

Someexperiencecosmicconsciousness.Thisisarareexperience. It cannot be expressed in words. Mayaistheillusorypoweroftheord.Mayahidestherealand makes the unreal appear as real. Maya is shuddha (pure) satva.

Do notenquirenowintotheoriginofmaya.Striveforitsdestruction. Maya is indescribable. It can becrossedthroughthegraceofGodacquiredbyself-surrender When jnana is attained, then you willknowallaboutmaya.

Avidyaisignorance.Itisthecauseforbondage.Vidyaisthecause for liberation. Destroy the root of avidyathroughknowledgeofatman.

Avidyaisthecausalbodyoftheindividualsoul.Itisimpuresatva. It is mixed with rajas (activity) and tamas(inertia).Avidyaisthecauseforbirthsanddeaths. Mind and body are the effects of avidya.

SamadhiisunionwithGod.Itisastateofeternalblissandeternal wisdom. It cannot be described in words.Insavikalpasamadhithereisthetriad,knower,knowledge, and knowable. In samadhi mind, intellectandsensesceasefunctioning.Alldualitiesvanish in toto.

Meditate ceaselesslyandenjoythesupremeblissofnirvikalpa samadhi.

Please note the differencebetweensleepandsamadhi.Sleep is an inert state. But samadhi is a state of pure awareness orpureconsciousness.

When a man returns fromsleep,heisheavyanddull.Hehasno experience of wisdom of atman.
But when the yogi comesdownfromsamadhi,heisfullofwisdom of atman.

29 FEBRUARY - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Jnana yogaistheyogaofwisdom.Itisvedanta.Itis the culmination of all the other yogas. It teaches thattheindividualsoulis,inessenceidentical with the supreme Soul. When avidya (ignorance)isdestroyedtheindividualsoulmergesin the supreme soul.

The aspirantshouldequiphimselfwiththefourmeans of salvation - study the scriptures (Upanishad)underaguruandmeditate.Hewillattain self-realisation. The mind alone is the universe.Thebodywithitsorgans,etc.,isnootherthan mind.

The slayerofatman(self)isthemindonly.Theactions of the mind alone are, indeed actions, but not sothoseofthebody.Themindcontemplatingupon the body becomes the body itself and then, enmeshed in it, is afflicted by it.

Slay the mind and attain eternal bliss.

HewhohasaguruknowsBrahman.Agurualonecan remove doubts, pitfalls and snares. Guru is GodHimself.Allthatagurucandoistotellhisdisciple the method of knowing the truth or the paththatleadstothedisclosureoftheintuitionalfaculty.

He willclearyourdoubts,removepitfallsandsnaresand inspire you. He cannot give you samadhi (superconsciousstate).Youwillhavetoplaceeachstep yourself on the rung of the ladder of yoga. Do notexpectamiraclefromyourguru,toputyouinto samadhi.

Everymanwantseverlastinghappiness.Thisishisinnate feeling. This indicates that his soul is an embodimentofbliss.

Everybodywantsfullknowledgeofeverything.This gives the clue that atman is a mass of knowledge.Everymanwantsfreedom.Itgivestheclue that his atman is ever free. Search within and attaintheever-blissfulandeverfreeatman.

1 MARCH - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Now I will tell youwhatvicharais.Vicharameansenquiry. It is an enquiry into the nature of Brahman or atman.Enquiryof,"WhoamI"isalsovichara.

What is bondage?Whatisfreedom?Whatistherelation between the jiva and Brahman? How was this Universeborn?WhoistheCreator?Theseconstitute vichara. Vichara leads to Brahma jnana (realisationoftheInfinite).

You are imprisonedinthiscageoffleshforalongtime on account of your identification with the body. Cutthisillusionwiththeswordofknowledge. "I am the all-pervading sat-chit-ananda Brahman" - and be ever blissful.

Give up"I-ness,mine-ness",agencyordoership.Become a silent witness. This is wisdom. Brahmanortheabsoluteistheonlyreality.Mindand the universe are unreal. Mind alone is the universe. Action of the mind alone is karma.

Renunciationofegoismanddesiresconstitutesrealrenunciation. This leads to atma-jnana (self-knowledge).PractiseBrahmavicharaandyouwillsoon attain self-realisation.

Identificationwiththebodyisbondage.Identification with the atman or soul is liberation. "I am body", "Thisismine","Heismyson","Sheismywife" - this is bondage. "I am all-pervading immortalsoul","Nothingbelongstome","AllisBrahman" - this is liberation.

If themindisattachedtoobjects,thisisbondage.If it is unattached, this is liberation. Where thereisnoduality,thereisimmortality.Whenthethree knots are cut one attains immortality.

If yourobjectinlifeisimmortality,shunsense-objects as poison. Where there is nothing to be seen,orheard,orthoughtof,thereisimmortality.Immortality is the very nature of atman. The roadtoimmortalityissteepandthorny.Thehelpofa realised sage is necessary, at every step.

2 MARCH - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Walk theBrahmanway.Brahmacharyaiswalking with God or Brahman. Brahmacharya is the Brahman way.

RegardawomanasmotherorDevi(goddess). This is brahmacharya of the eye. Hear not lustful talks.Thisisbrahmacharyaoftheear.Speaknot of woman. This is brahmacharya of the tongue. Entertainnotlustfulthoughts.Thisisbrahmacharya of the mind.

Brahmanissupremegoodness.Rajasandtamas are the causes for evil, Evil is a mere appearance. Itexiststoglorifygood.Evilisakindofknowledge which shows the superiority of goodness, by way of comparison.

Anevilmanisasaintofthefuture.Seegood in everything. Destroy the evil-finding quality. Developthegood-findingquality.Riseabove good and evil. Your real nature is essentially satchidanandaBrahman.Thouart-theinfinite, all-pervading, self-luminous, eternal atman, the supreme soul.

Tat TwamAsi.ThouartThat.

Roar OMOMOM-Sivoham.Soham.Satchidananda Sivaroopoham. Come out of this cage of flesh. Knowthyessentialdivinenature.Thouart the whole, the infinite, the absolute, the eternal, the immortal.Thouartabovepleasureandpain, joy and sorrow, all pairs of opposites.

Knock within.Searchwithin.Gazewithin.Within you is the immortal soul. • Aim at perfection.
Fight life's battlebravely.Livewisely.Strengthen your resolution. Become one with the eternal.

Have tenacityofpurpose.Climbthepeakofperfection. Self-realisation is here and now. Attain life's goal. Ifyouobserveperfectphysicalbrahmacharya (celibacy), you will have control over your temper. Youwillnotbecomeirritable.Gradually you can attempt to attain mental brahmacharya, through japa(repetitionofGod'sname),meditation, discrimination and enquiry.

BrahmacharyaisthefirstrequisiteforGod-realisation. Brahmacharya is the pathway to the kingdom of God.Mayyoubeestablishedinperfect brahmacharya.

3 MARCH - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Self-realisation is not a process. It is not a becoming. It is pure being. It is not a new thing to be attained.

The aspirant knows that he is the all-pervading, immortal soul. To know that is to become that. Self-realisation is direct, intuitive perception of the atman. All distinctions vanish. The sage is freed from fear, sorrow and pain.

Do not get false contentment. Do not imagine that you have reached the highest nirvikalpa state, and stop your sadhana (practice).

Slay spiritual pride. Shun the company of worldly persons who always talk on sexual matters, money and worldly topics.

Observe the laws of health and hygiene. Be moderate in eating and drinking. Do not overwork. This will produce fatigue.

Fight bravely in this battle of life. Be bold. Be cheerful. Be patient. Be wise.

Arm yourself with the shield of discrimination and the sword of dispassion. March forward courageously, O brave spiritual soldier. Yield not to temptations.

Yoga is an exact science. It aims at the harmonious development of the body, the mind and the soul.

Thou art divine. Live up to it. Feel and realise thy divine nature. Yoga of synthesis is a unique yoga. It is suitable for the vast majority of persons.

Man thinks, feels and wills. He must develop his heart, intellect and hand. Then alone can he attain perfection or integral development.

Everyone should have one yoga as a basic yoga. He must combine karma yoga, hatha yoga, raja yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga. This is the yoga of synthesis.

4 MARCH - EPISTLE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Take stock of the past year. Turn back the leaves of your spiritual diary. Mark your spiritual progress. Note how far you have advanced in cultivating virtues, like humility, courage, truthfulness, cosmic love, purity, etc., and in the control of the senses.

Even if there is a set-back in certain things, nil desperandum. March forward, O adhyatmic (spiritual) hero. Look not back. A brilliant future is awaiting you.

God is the source of all happiness. All beings abide in Him. He is an embodiment of peace, wisdom and bliss. He is truth, love, beauty and goodness. All beings abide in Him.

God is one, God and His laws are one. God is love and law. God is pure spirit. God is the path and the goal. God alone is your real father, mother, friend and guru.

Realise God now and here and be happy for ever. The deeper a man's love of God is, the greater is his spiritual knowledge, in due proportion to his capacity and depth of love.

The final consummation of the love of God is union with God. Love of God is inborn in a man by virtue of his spiritual evolution. May you live in God.

To realise God is your duty. God-realisation is your birth-right. Develop strong yearning for God-realisation. Have confidence in your self. Be self-controlled. Be fiery in your determination. Stick to your resolves tenaciously.

Cultivate a very strong faith in God. Do total self-surrender and obtain His grace. May you be established in God-consciousness. I shall tell you about the nature of the atman or Brahman. The supreme self or atman abides in the chambers of your heart. It is the substratum of this world, mind, prana (life), body and senses.

Itis satchidananda. It is immortal, infinite, eternal, ever pure, ever free, perfect and independent. Itis one without a second. Itistruth and wisdom. It is formless and attributeless.

5 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD(1)
MANTRA - 1
NOW YOGAISEXPLAINED
Notes and Commentary

Yoga is the statewhereinthereisnosankalpa-vikalpa(thoughtordoubt).Yogaisthecontrolof mind and its modifications.Yogaistheequalstatebetweenjivatma(soul)andparamatma(God). The word 'Yogi'signifiesanaspirantorastudentinthepathofyoga,aswellasafull-blown developed adeptinyoga.Hewhoisfullyestablishedinthehighestnirvikalpasamadhi (superconsciousness)isayogi.Hewhopractisesyogaisalsoayogi.A'rajayogi'isotherwise known as 'dhyanayogi'.Dhyanameansmeditation.Itisthecontinuousflowofoneideaof God. Raja yoga aims atcontrollingallthought-wavesormentalmodifications.Itconcernswiththe mind, its purificationandcontrol.Henceitiscalled,'rajayogakingofyogas.'Itisotherwiseknown as ashtanga yoga(yogawitheightlimbs).

A sutra meansathreadoraphorismortersesaying.Eachsutraispregnantwithhigh,sublime ideas. Withoutthehelpofcommentary,itisdifficulttounderstandthemeaningsofthe aphorisms. Justasflowersorpearlsarestuddedinastringorathread,evenso,philosophicalor spiritual ideasarestuddedinasutraorthread.

Food (ahara),sleep(nidra),fear(bhaya),andcoition(maithuna)arecommontobothanimalsand humanbeings.Butmanhasgotintelligence,powerofdiscrimination(viveka)andpowerof enquiry(vicharashakti);withthehelpofthesespecialpowers,hecanrealisehisselfandcan know histruenature.Evendevas(gods)areenviousofhumanbeings,becausedeva-yoni(divine species)ismerebhoga-yoni(enjoyment).Theycanenjoyonlywithadaivic(divine)body.Man has gotbothkarma-yoni(activity)andbhoga-yoni.Hecandonishkamyakarmayogaandattain jnanathroughchittasuddhi(purityofmind).Hecantakerecoursetovariousyogicpracticesfor spiritualunfoldmentandcanbecomeafull-blownyogiinthisbirth.Horsesanddogspossess minds.Buttheyhaveneitherdiscriminationnorintelligencenorvicharashakti.Henceitisnot possible for them to attain freedom.

You willfindinYajnavalkyaSmrtithatHiranyagarbhawastheoriginalteacherofyoga.Patanjali Maharishiisonlyacompilerorexplaineroftheyogicprinciplesandtenetstaughtandpractised by Hiranyagarbhaandothers.

6 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD
MANTRA - 2
YOGA IS THE RESTRAINTOFTHETHOUGHT-WAVES
Notes and Commentary

Now I proceedtoexplainthesystemofyogaphilosophyinbriefandbringhometothereaders the salientandvitalpointsintheyogicsystem.Yogateacheshowtocontrolthevrittis(thought-waves) ofthemindandgetfreedom.Yogateacheshowtocurbtheoutgoingmindandattain one's purestateofblissbygoingbeyondthemind.Yogateacheshowtotransmutethe unregeneratenatureandattainthestateofdivinity.Yogaisacompletesuppressionofthe tendency of the mind to transform itself into objects, thoughts, etc.

Raja yogaisanexactscience.Onecanascendtheyogicladderpatientlythroughitsdifferent rungs.Thehighestsummitoftheladderisasamprajnatasamadhi(superconsciousness),wherein all thesamskaras(mentalimpressions),whichbringaboutsuccessivebirths,areabsolutelyfried up. Theeightlimbsofashtangayogaare:yama(self-restraint),niyama(religiousobservances or canons),asana(posture),pranayama(restraintofbreath),pratyahara(abstractionofsenses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (super-conscious state).

This is onekindofclassificationofyoga:karma,upasana,rajayogaandjnana.Thisisyogatraya (three-foldyoga).Upasanaisbhakti.Anotherclassificationismantrayoga,layayoga,hathayoga and raja yoga.Mantrayogaisrecitationofmantrasas"OmNamahSivaya”ofLordSiva,"Om Namo Narayanaya"ofLordVishnu,Gayatri,etc.Layayogaiskundaliniyoga.Nadaanusadhana (concentrationonanahatasoundsofheart)isalsolayayoga.Layameansdissolution.Themind is dissolved in God.

Hatha yoga relatestotherestraintofbreath(pranayama),Asanas,bandhas,mudras,etc.'Ha'and ‘Tha’ means theunionofsunandmoon,unionofpranaandapana.Hathameansanyobstinate practice till theobjectorendisachieved.Hathaisstickingtosomespiritualpractices.Mauna (vow of silence),trataka(steadygazing),crystal-gazing,standingononeleg(akindofausterity) etc., are all hathapractices.Hathayogaisnotseparatefromrajayoga.Itpreparesthestudent to take up raja yoga.Hathayogaisconcernedwiththebreath(prana)andthephysicalbody. Pranayama purifiesthepranamayakosha(vitalsheath).

7 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD
MANTRA - 3
THEN THERE IS COMMUNION WITH THE LORD
Notes and Commentary

The word 'Yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj' which means 'to join'. By the practice of yoga, the individual soul (jivatma) is united with the supreme soul (paramatma). Yoga means union with God. Then all samsara (cycle of birth and death) comes to an end.

Yoga kills all sorts of pain - miseries and tribulations. Yoga frees you from the samsaric wheel of birth and death. - Yoga gives you various powers and liberation through jnana (self-knowledge). Therefore drink the elixir or nectar of immortality and become a yogi. "Tasmat Yogi bhava Arjuna", Gita, Ch. VI - 46. Union with God is the goal of human life. It is the be-all and end-all of our existence. It is the summum bonum.

The Lord (Ishvara) of raja, yoga is a special purusha (person) who is not affected by the five afflictions and the fruit of actions and desires. His name or symbol is Om. He is indicated by the mono-syllable Om. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, etc.

SONG OF REAL SADHANA

Do real sadhana, my dear children (Do real sadhana ....)
sadhana - sadhana - sadhana - sadhana

To free yourself from birth and death
And enjoy the highest bliss
I will tell you the surest way
Kindly hearken with greatest care (Do real sadhana ....)

Acquire first sadhana chatushtaya,
Then proceed to the feet of sadguru,
After having shravan and manan,
Then do practise nidhidhyasan, (Do real sadhana ....)

Remove first the old, old dehaadhyas,
By repeating Sivoham Bhavana,
Then remove the veil, avarana,
You will rest in your own swaroop. (Do real sadhana ....)

8 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD
MANTRA - 4
LEARN THE YOGA UNDER A GURU
Notes and Commentary

Learntheyogaunderaguru(preceptor).Thenonlywillyoubeabletounderstandthesubtle points.Getpracticallessonsalsofromhim.Thenaloneyouwillgrowrapidly.Hewillremoveyour doubtsandshowyoutherightpath,becausehehasalreadytroddenthepathhimself.Hewill pointoutthepitfalls,snares,etc.,thattemptanddeceivetheaspirantsonthepath.Hewillinspire his disciples.

Justaswaterflowsfromahigherleveltoalowerlevel,soalsothegraceoftheguruflowstowards thediscipleifthelatterhasatruereceptiveattitudeandsincerefaithinhisguru.Justaselectricity flowsfromapositive-chargebatterytowardsthenegativepole,evensothepower,energy,love, wisdomandspiritualcurrentflowfromthemaster-mindofayogitowardsthelessermindofthe disciple.

Even incookingandtypewritingyouwantagurutoguide.Whensuchisthecasewithordinary mattersandsecularsciences,whattospeakofthescienceofyogawhichtreatsofsublime spiritualmattersandtranscendentalquestions?Themysteriesofknowledgearehandeddown from guru to disciple.

Booksalsocanhelpyou.Theywillinspireyou.Theycanguideyouonlytoacertainextent.You willhavetopractiseforyourselfyama,niyamaortherulesofrightconductbeforeyouapproach a guru.Youcanstarttheminorpracticesasana,pranayama,someconcentrationexercisesetc., withthehelpofbooks.Bookswrittenbyrealisedpersonscanservethepurposeofagurutillyou comeinpersonalcontactwitharealisedyogioradept.Youcanalsogethelpfromseniorаspirants in thepathofyoga.

Makeaprogrammeofyourlife.Drawupaspiritualroutine.Sticktoitsystematicallyandregularly. Applydiligently.Neverwasteasingleminute.Lifeisshort.Timeisfleeting.That"tomorrow"will nevercome-nowornever.Standupwithafirmresolve:"Iwillbecomeayogithisverymoment." Girdupyourloins.Dorigid,constantyogasadhanaoryogaabhyasa.Ifyouareverysincerein yourpracticeandifyourmindisfilledwithburningvairagya(dispassion)andkeenlongingfor liberation (mumukshatwa), you can reach perfection within six months.

9 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD
MANTRA - 5
A VRITTI IS A 'WHIRLPOOL' IN THE MIND-LAKE
Notes and Commentary

Vritti literally means a whirlpool. It is a thought-wave in the lake of chitta. Chitta is the mind-stuff or mental substance. It takes various forms. These forms constitute vrittis. It gets transformed or modified (parinama). These transformations and modifications are the thought-waves, whirlpools or vrittis. If the chitta thinks of a mango, the vritti of a mango is formed in the lake of chitta. This will subside and another vritti will be formed when it thinks of milk (milk-vritti). Countless vrittis are rising and subsiding in the ocean of chitta. These vrittis cause restlessness of mind. Why do vrittis arise from chitta? Because of samskaras (habits) and vasanas (desires). If you annihilate all desires, all vrittis will subside by themselves. When a vritti subsides it leaves a definite impression in the subconscious mind. It is known as samskara or latent impression. The sum-total of all samskaras is known as karmashaya (receptacle of works). This is sanchita karma (accumulated work). When a man leaves the physical body, he carries with him his astral body of seventeen tatvas and the karmashaya as well to the mental plane. This karmashaya is burnt by the highest knowledge obtained through asamprajnata samadhi.

Modification is a vritti in the mind. When the vritti subsides it assumes the subtle state of potency or samskara in the chitta or subconscious mind. This potency again becomes a vritti under suitable conditions, when the mind comes in contact with sensual objects or through memory of objects from stimulus within. There are degrees in the vrittis or modifications that arise from the mind. You can check or control the lower vritti with the help of higher vrittis or transformations. For instance, anger is a lower vritti or a vritti of a lower degree. Kshama (forgiveness) is a vritti of a higher degree. With the help of kshama you can control the lower vritti, anger. You can become a yogarudha (one who is established in yoga) by controlling all the vrittis of the mind. The yogi does not annihilate himself by controlling all the vrittis or modifications of the mind. By suppressing the transformations of the mind he acquires great powers. He becomes an (adept or perfect being) siddha.

10 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 5 (CONTINUED)

Although the mindisone,itpassesintomanyconditionsorstates,asitismadeupofthree qualities (gunas)-satva,rajasandtamas.Allthesequalitiesenterintoavarietyofcombinations. The modificationsorvrittisofthemindarealsovarious.Peaceofmindisasatvicvritti.Lustisa rajasic vritti.Lazinessisatamasicvritti.

By destroyingthevrittisonebyone,yougainmoreandmorementalstrength(manasicbala)and spiritual strength(atmabala).Dothepracticeandfeelthestrengthyourself.Theannihilationof even one vrittiwillgiveyoustrengthtodestroythesecondvrittithatistormentingyou.Patience, perseveranceandperishistentsadhanaarenecessary.HowdifficultisittogettheM.A.degree? How muchmoredifficultshoulditbe,ifyouwanttoattainthestateofimmortalityandabsolute freedom?Justasyouremoveasmallpebblethatcausesirritationtoyourfeet,soalsoyoushould then andthereremoveeveryvrittithattormentsthemind.Unlessanduntilyouareabletodo so, youhavenotgainedanyrealmentalstrengthorspiritualpower.Justasyouextractatooth and thenchuckitaway,soalsoyoushouldextractadisturbingvrittiandcastitaside.Rajayoga teacheshowtoextractorrootoutthedisturbingthoughts.Youwillhavetopayaheavypricefor mastering this yoga.

Ignorantpeopleidentifythemselveswiththebody,mindandthevrittisofthemind.Themind and thebodyareinstrumentsonly.Therealmanisbehindthemind.Ifyoubecomeonewiththe mind,bodyandvritti,yougetvarioussortsofmiseriesandsufferings.Thewholeuniverseis createdbythevrittisofthemindonly.Ifthesementalwavesorthought-wavessubside,youcan attaintheabsolutestate.Justasyoucanclearlyseethebottomofalakewhentheripplesand wavessubside,soalsoyoucancogniseyourrealselfwhenthevrittisthatagitateyourmind subside.

11 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 6

THOUGHT IS A THING. THOUGHT IS A DYNAMIC FORCE

Notes and Commentary

Thought is as muchathingastheyonder piece of stone. It has weight, colour, shape, size and form. Thought isadynamicforce.Itiscaused by the vibrations of psychic prana (sukshma prana) on the mental substance.Itisaforcelike gravitation, cohesion or repulsion. Thought travels or moves. Thoughthasgottremendouspower. Thought can heal diseases. Thoughts can transform the mentality ofpersons.Thoughtcando anything. It can work wonders. The velocity of thought is unimaginable.

Thoughtisafinerforce.Thisissupplied to us by food. If you read Chandogya Upanishad - the dialoguebetweenUddalakaandSwetaketu - you will understand this point well. If the food is pure, thoughtalsobecomespure.He who has pure thoughts speaks very powerfully and producesdeepimpressiononthemінds of the hearers by his speech. He influences thousands of personsthroughhispurethoughts.Apure thought is sharper than the edge of a razor. Entertain alwayspuresublimethoughts.Thought-culture is an exact science.

Thinkingisoffourkinds,viz.,symbolic thinking, instinctive thinking, impulsive thinking and habitualthinking.Thinkingthroughwords is symbolic thinking. Instincts are more powerful than impulses.Thoughtsofbody,food,drink, bath, etc., are habitual thinking. You can stop easily symbolicthinking.Itisdifficulttostopinstinctive and impulsive thinking.

Thoughtisagreatforce.Thoughthastremendous power. It can be transmitted from one man to anotherman.Youcanmovetheworld through thought-force. The powerful thoughts of great sages (rshis)ofyorearestillrecordedin the akasha (akashic records). Yogis who have clairvoyant vision canperceivethosethought-images. They can read them. You are surrounded by an ocean of thought.Youarefloatingintheocean of thought. You are absorbing certain thoughts and repelling some in the thought world.

Every onehashisownthought-world. Through practice of yama, niyama, pranayama and meditation,youcanchangeimpurethoughts into suitable pure thoughts. Meditation fills the mind withcheerful,powerful,satvicthoughts.

12 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 7

CHITTA IS THE MIND-STUFFFROMWHICHTHEVRITTISARISE

Notes and Commentary

The thinking principleisacomprehensiveexpressionequivalenttothesanskrittermantahkarana. Antahkarana isabroadtermusedinvedanta.Itincludesmanas(mind),buddhi(intellect), chitta and ahamkara(egoismorself-assertingprinciple). The

onemindassumesthethreeotherforms,buddhi,chittaandahamkaraaccording to the differentfunctionsitperforms(vrittibheda),justasonemanisajudgeincourts,president in a sabha,store-keeperinastoreandgeneralsecretaryofamanagingcommittee.Manas is a sankalpavikalpatmaka(willinganddoubting),Itthinkswhethertogotoaplaceornot,whether to dothisornot,andwhetherthisisgoodorbad.Themindisofadoubtingnature.

Buddhi(intellect)nischayatmaka(certitude).Itisthedeterminingfaculty,Itisthatlightof buddhi that determinesonewayortheother.ImustgotoDehraDunbythiseveningtrain.Imust do this work. This is good.

Chittadoesthefunctionofanusandhana(contemplation)anddharana(concentration). The functionofmemoryalsobelongstochitta.Accordingtoyogaphilosophy,chittaisthemind-stuff or thementalsubstance;andthemind,intellect,andegoismarevariousprocessesinthe mind-stuff.

Ahamkaraistheself-arrogatingprinciple.Itdoesthefunctionofabhimana(identification). It createsmamata(mineness).Thisistherootcauseofallhumansufferings.Allvrittishang upon this one"AhamVritti"("I"thought).Itistherootcauseofhumanignorance.

It shouldbedistinctlyborneinmindthatthethinkingprinciple-mind-isnottheatman (self) who is thefountain-sourceofallconsciousnessorknowledge.Justasapieceofironmoves in the presenceofamightymagnet,soalsothelittlemindmovesinthepresenceofthemajestic atman. Just as aministerworkswithfearinthepresenceofaking,soalsothemindworksinthe same way in thepresenceofthekingofkings,theatman.Justasamirrorborrowsitslightfrom the sun, so alsothemindborrowsitslightfromtheatman,theSupremeBeing.

13 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 8

PERCEPTION COMES ONLY WHEN THE MIND IS CONNECTED WITH THE CENTRE AND EXTERNAL INSTRUMENT

Notes and Commentary

Modification of mind is known as parinama. When milk is changed into curd, it is also parinama. Even so the mind gets modified into a vritti by assuming the form of the object it perceives. Knowledge of perception is a kind of transformation (parinama) of the mind.

Some people sleep with their eyes open. The object is there. The centre of vision is there and yet they cannot see the object. Why? Because the mind is not there. Therefore three things are necessary for perception of an object viz., the physical instrument, the external fleshy eyes which act as windows to the soul; the centre of the vision in the brain and the mind. It is the mind that really sees. It is the commander of the five senses. The senses carry the vibrations from outside to the mind. They are avenues of sense-knowledge.

According to Sankhya philosophy, it is the purusha or soul that is the real perceiver of an object. The sense transmits the sense-vibrations to the mind, and the mind in its turn presents the vibrations to the prime minister of the soul, the buddhi or intellect, the discriminative faculty, which is very close to the soul. Now, reaction comes in. With the reaction of the buddhi egoism manifests side by side. Then the whole thing is presented to purusha who really perceives all objects.

Ifthe physical instrument, eye, is not in a good working order owing to cataract or any other disease, you cannot have perception of an object. The eye may be all right, but if the centre of vision that is situated in the occipital lobe of the brain at the back of the skull does not function properly owing to the diseases of this particular lobe of the brain, in that case also you can have hardly any perception of any object. The eye and the centre of the vision may be in sound condition, but if the mind is not linked with the centre and the external eye, you can hardly have perception of any object. Sometimes a man says: "I did not hear. I did not see. My mind was elsewhere." You will find such instances in your daily life.

14 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 8 (CONTINUED)

PERCEPTION COMES ONLY WHEN THE MIND IS CONNECTED WITH THE CENTRE AND EXTERNAL INSTRUMENT

When you are deeply engaged in solving a mathematical problem, you do not hear any sound though your friends shout loudly by your side. Tram-cars and motor cars run about in the street. If you are deeply engaged in something, you do not hear them. Why? Because your mind was not linked with the organ of hearing. The indriyas cannot do anything by themselves. They need the help of their master, the mind, at every moment. It is the mind that sees, hears, tastes, smells and feels. Senses simply transmit the sense-vibrations from outside to the mind.

The table that you see is a mental kalpana (imagination). This table, though you see it externally, really exists in your mind. A mental picture or image plus external something is the table. That which exists outside is unknown and unknowable. Mind reacts to external vibrations and you see the external universe. If there is no mind there is no universe. Where is the world for you during deep sleep? Hence this world is termed as manomatra jagat or manahkalpita jagat. This mind is the universe. There is no world apart from the mind.

How can a tiny lens produce a big image of a mountain? A small image is produced by the lens, the retina and the optic centre. It is the mind that develops and enlarges it. All the pictures do already exist in the mind. What you perceive as a big mountain outside is only the mental image plus some external unknowable something.

Ifyou say: 'there is nothing outside' why do you run after food and water when you are hungry and thirsty? If everything is within, you should get satisfaction from hunger and thirst from within only. But it is not the case. There is something outside, call it a vivarta appearance) of Brahman, vilasa (expansion) of maya, chamatkara (trick) of avidya (ignorance), parinama (modification) of Vishnu, electrical waves of scientists, combination of anus (atoms) of Kanada or tatva (elemental) vilasa. It does not matter much.

15 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 9

PLEASURE ALSO MUST BE GIVEN UP AS PAIN

Notes and Commentary

Pleasure that is derived from sensual objects gives pain to one who discriminates. Worldly-minded persons who have lost the faculty of discrimination, rejoice in sensual objects on account of lack of discrimination. They weep in old age. You weep when you are born. You weep when you die. You weep in the interval also. Where then is pleasure in the world? Learn to discriminate. Become a yogi. Yoga will put an end to all sorts of pain. Yoga will destroy all kleshas (afflictions). Wake up. Open your eyes. Practise yoga, my child!

Sensual pleasure is momentary, deceptive, illusory and imaginary. A mustard seed of pleasure is mixed with a mountain of pain. Enjoyment cannot bring about satisfaction of a desire. On the contrary it makes the mind more restless after enjoyment through intense craving (trisnas and vasanas). Sensual pleasure is the cause of birth and death. This body is nothing but a mass of flesh, bone, and all sorts of filth.

Place before the mind the fruits of self-realisation or life in the soul or Brahman or the eternal such as immortality, eternal bliss, supreme peace and infinite knowledge. If you remember these points always, the mind will be weaned from the cravings for sensual pleasure. Vairagya, viveka and mumukshatwa (dispassion, discrimination from the real and unreal and keen longing for liberation from birth and death) will dawn. You should seriously look into the defects of the sensual life and into the unreal nature of worldly life.

Just as pure gold which has been treated in the crucible with borax etc., and rendered pure, shines brilliantly, so also the yogi, whose mind is rendered pure by the agents of vairagya and abhyasa, becomes a lustrous person.

16 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 10

PRAKRTI OPERATES THROUGH THREE GUNAS

Notes and Commentary

Satva, rajas and tamas are the three gunas or qualities of the mind. Satva is purity or light or knowledge. Rajas is passion or activity. Tamas is inertia or darkness. By checking rajas and tamas you can increase the satva. When the satva is increased the mind becomes steady like the flame of a lamp in a windless place. He who is satvic can do real concentration and meditation and can enter into samadhi (superconscious state) easily. A rajasic man loves power and objects of sense. A tamasic man does vicious actions on account of ignorance. Satva cannot stand by itself. It is mixed with disturbing rajas and tamas. When there is preponderance of satva, rajas and tamas get controlled. But they lurk in the mind all the same.

Where there is increase of satva, there is brightness, lightness, joy, purity, strength, peace and illumination. Your important duty is to increase satva and control the senses and the mind. Other duties are secondary only. A sensible man only can understand this point.

The mind is wandering (ksipta)and unsteady through the disturbing energy rajas (passion) which makes the mind run towardsvarious sensual objects. The mind becomes (mudha) forgetful when itis filled with tamas (inertia).Deep sleep supervenes on account of excess of tamas.

17 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 11

DHARANA (CONCENTRATION) IS FIXING THE MIND ON AN IDEA OR A POINT OR OBJECT EITHER INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL

Notes and Commentary

Itis very difficult to say where concentration ends and meditation begins. Meditation follows concentration. Purify the mind first through the practice of yama (self control) and niyama (discipline). Then take to the practice of dharana. Concentration without purity is of no use. There are some occultists who are much advanced in concentration. But they have no good character. That is the reason why they do not make any progress in the spiritual path. Some foolish, impatient yogic students take to dharana at once without undergoing the preliminary ethical training. They want to have a long jump. They break their legs and fall down. This is a serious blunder. Ethical perfection is of paramount importance.

Concentration is steadfastness of mind. If you remove all causes of distraction, your power of concentration will increase. A true Brahmachari (celibate) who has preserved his virya (vitality) will have wonderful concentration. Attention plays a prominent part in concentration. He who has developed his power of attention will have good concentration. You should be able to visualise very clearly the object of concentration even in its absence. You must call up the mental picture in a moment's notice. If you have good practice in concentration you can do this without difficulty. He who has gained success in pratyahara (abstraction) by withdrawing the indriyas (senses) from the various objects will have good concentration. You will have to march in the spiritual path step by step, stage by stage. Lay the foundation of yama (right conduct), niyama, asana (posture) , pranayama and pratyahara to start with. The super structure of dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi will be successful then only.

Asana is bahiranga sadhana (external practice); dhyana is antaranga sadhana (internal). When compared with dhyana and samadhi, even dharana is bahiranga sadhana. He who has steady asana and has purified the yoga-nadis and the pranamaya kosha (vital sheath) through pranayama will be able to concentrate easily.

18 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA-11(CONTINUED)

You canconcentrateinternallyonanyofthesevenplexus or cakras or centres of spiritual energy, or at thetipofthenose,ortipofthetongueorexternally on the picture of any devata (deity), Hari, Hara,KrishnaorDevi.Youcanconcentrateonthe tick-tick sound of a watch or the flame of a candle,oronablackpointonawall,oronapencilor rose flower or any pleasing object. This is concreteconcentration.Therecanbenoconcentration without something upon which the mind may rest.Themindcanbefixedeasilyonapleasingobject such as jasmine flower, mango, orange or a lovingfriend.Itisdifficulttofixthemindinthebeginning on any object which it dislikes such as faecalmatter,cobra,enemy,uglyface,etc.Practise concentration till the mind is well establishedontheobjectofconcentration.Whenthe mind runs away from the object of concentration,bringitbackagainandagaintotheobject. Lord Krishna says: "As often as the waveringandunsteadymindgoesforth,sooftenreining it in, let him bring it under the control of the self". (Gita Ch. VI - 26.)

Ifyouwanttoincreaseyourpowerofconcentration you will have to reduce your worldly activities.Youwillhavetoobservemauna(vowofsilence) for two hours daily. A man whose mind isfilledwithpassionandallsortsoffantasticdesirescan hardly concentrate on any object even forasecond.Hismindwillbeoscillatinglikeaballoon. Regulate and master the breath. Subdue thesensesandthenfixthemindonanypleasingobject. Associate the ideas of holiness and purity with the object.

You can concentrate on the space between the two eyebrows (trikuti). You can concentrate on the mystic sounds (anahata dhvani) that you hear from your right ear. You can concentrate on Om picture. The picture of Lord Krishna with flute in hand and the picture of Lord Vishnu with conch, discus, mace and lotus are very good for concentration. You can concentrate on the picture of your guru or any saint also. Vedantins try to fix the mind on atman, the inner self. This is their dharana.

Dharana is the sixth stage or limb of ashtanga yoga or raja yoga of Patanjali Maharshi. In dharana you will have only one vritti or wave in the mind-lake. The mind assumes the form of only one object. All other operations of the mind are suspended or stopped. He who can practise real concentration for half or one hour will have tremendous psychic powers. His 'will' also will be very powerful.

19 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 11 (CONTINUED)

When hatha yogis concentrate their minds on the six supports (the sad-cakras), they concentrate their minds on the respective presiding deities also, viz., Ganesa, Brahma, Visnu, Rudra Ishvara and Sadasiva. Control the breath through pranayama. Subdue the senses through pratyahara. And thin fix the mind either on a form or the formless Brahman. According to hatha yogic school, a yogi who can suspend his breath by kumabhak for 20 minutes can have very good dharana. He will have a very tranquil mind. Pranayama steadies the mind, removes vikshepa (distraction) and increases the power of concentration. Those who practise khecari mudra by cutting the frenum lingue and lengthening the tongue and fixing it in the hole in the palate by taking upwards will have good dharana.

Those who practise concentration evolve quickly. They can do any work with scientific accuracy and great efficiency. What others do in six hours can be done by one who has concentration within half an hour. What others can read in six hours, can be read by one who does concentration within half an hour. Concentration purifies and calms the surging emotions,, strengthens the current of thought and clarifies the ideas. Concentration helps a man in his material progress also. He will turn out a very good amount of work in his office or business house. What was cloudy and hazy before becomes clear and definite. What was difficult before becomes easy now and what was complex, bewildering and confusing before comes easily within the mental grasp. You can achieve anything through concentration. Nothing is impossible for a man who practises regular concentration. It is very difficult to practise concentration when one is hungry and when one is suffering from an acute disease. He who practises concentration will possess very good health and very clear mental vision.

Ifyou read with concentration the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana or the eleventh skandha of Bhagavatam several times, you will get new ideas each time. Through concentration you will get penetrative insight. Subtle, esoteric meanings will flash out in the field of mental consciousness. You will understand inner depths of philosophical significance. When you concentrate on any object do not wrestle with themind. Avoid tension anywhere in the body or mind. Think gently of the object in a continuousmanner. Do not allow the mind to wander away.

20 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 11 (CONTINUED)

Retire into a quiet room; sit on padmasana. Close your eyes. See what happens when you concentrate on an apple. You may think of its colour, shape, size and its different parts such as skin, pulp, seeds, etc. You may think of the places (Australia or Kashmere) wherefrom it is imported. You may think of its acidic or sweet taste and its effects on the digestive system and blood. Through law of association ideas of some other fruits also may try to enter. The mind may entertain some other extraneous ideas. It may begin to wander about. It may think of meeting a friend at the railway station at 4 p.m. It may think of purchasing a towel or a tin of tea and biscuits. It may ponder over some unpleasant happening that occurred the previous day. You must try to have a definite line of thought. There must not be any break in the line of thinking. You must not allow other thoughts which are not connected with the object on hand to enter. You will have to struggle hard to get success in this direction. The mind will try its level best to run in the old grooves and to take its old familiar road or old beaten path. The attempt is somewhat like going uphill. You will rejoice when you get even some success in concentration. Just as law of gravitation, cohesion, etc., operate in the physical plane, so also definite laws of thought such as law of association, law of relativity, law of continuity, etc., operate in the mental plane or thought-world. Those who practise concentration should thoroughly understand these laws. When the mind thinks of an object, it may think of its qualities and its parts also. When it thinks of a cause, itmay think of its effects also.

Ifemotions disturb you during concentration, do not mind them. They will pass away soon. If you tryto drive them, you will have to tax your will-force. Have an indifferent attitude. The vedantin uses the formulae: "I don't care. Get out. I am a sakshi (witness of the mental modifications)" to drive the emotions. The devotee simply prays and help comes from God.

Train the mind in concentration on various subjects, gross and subtle, and of various sizes, small, medium, and big. In course of time a firm habit of concentration will be formed. The moment you sit for concentration the mood will come at once quite easily. When you read a book, you must read it with concentration. There is no use skipping over the pages in a hurried manner. Read one page in the Gita. Close the book. Concentrate on what you have read. Find out parallel lines in Mahabharata, Upanishads and Bhagavatam. Compare and contrast.

21 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 11 CONTINUED

For a neophyte, the practice of concentration is disgusting and tiring in the beginning. He has to cut new grooves in the mind and brain. After some months he will get great interest in concentration. He will enjoy a new kind of happiness, the concentration-ananda. He will become restless if he fails to enjoy this new kind of happiness even on one day. Concentration is the only way to get rid of the worldly miseries and tribulations. Your only duty is to practise concentration. You have taken this physical body to practise concentration and through concentration to realise the self. Charity, rajasuya yajna are nothing when compared with concentration. They are playthings only.

Through vairagya (dispassion), pratyahara and practice of concentration, the dissipated rays of wandering mind are slowly collected. Through steady practice it is rendered one-pointed. How happy and strong is that yogi who has one-pointed mind! He can turn out voluminous work in the twinkling of an eye.

Those who practise concentration off and on will have only occasionally a steady mind. Sometimes the mind will begin to wander and will be quite unfit for application. You must have a mind that will obey you at all times sincerely and carry out all your commands in the best possible manner at anytime. Steady and systematic practice of raja yoga will make the mind very obedient and faithful.

There are five yoga bhumikas or stages or five stages of the mind, viz., kshipta (wandering), mudha (forgetfulness), vikshipta (gathering mind), ekagra (one-pointed), niruddha (controlled or well restrained). By gradual and well regulated practice of concentration daily, the rays of the wandering mind are collected. It becomes one pointed. Eventually it is curbed properly. It comes under proper control.

If the aspirant pursues what is not fitting, his progress is painful and sluggish. He who pursues what is fitting gets easy progress and quick intuition. He who has no past spiritual samskaras (tendencies) of previous birth makes painful progress. One who has such samskaras makes easy progress. In one whose nature is actually corrupt and whose controlling faculties are weak, progress is painful and intuition is sluggish. But to one of keen controlling faculties progress is rapid and intuition is quick. In one overcome by ignorance, intuition is sluggish; to one not so overcome, intuition is rapid.

22 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 12

DHYANA OR MEDITATION IS THE KEEPING UP OF FLOW OF ONE IDEA LIKE THE FLOW OF OIL

NOTES AND COMMENTARY

Meditation is of two kinds, viz., concrete and abstract. If you meditate on any picture of concrete object, it is concrete meditation. If you meditate on an abstract idea, on any quality (such as mercy, tolerance), it is abstract meditation. A beginner should practise concrete meditation. For some, abstract meditation is more easy than concrete.

The aspirant can take up the practice of meditation after he is well up in pratyahara (abstraction of senses) and concentration. If the senses are turbulent, if the mind cannot be fixed on one point, no meditation is possible even within hundreds of years. One should go stage by stage, step by step. The mind should be withdrawn again and again to the point when it runs. One should reduce his wants and renounce all sorts of wild, vain desires of the mind. A desireless man only can sit quiet and practise meditation. Satvic (pure) light diet and brahmacharya (celibacy) are the pre requisites for the practice of meditation.

Consciousness is of two kinds, viz., focusing consciousness and marginal consciousness. When you concentrate on trikuti, the space midway between the two eye-brows, your focusing consciousness is on the trikuti. When some flies sit on your left hand during meditation, you drive them with your right hand. When you become conscious of the flies it is called marginal consciousness.

Aseed which has remainedin fire for a second will not undoubtedly sprout into leaves even though sown in a fertile soil.Even so a mind that does meditation for some time but runs towards sensual objects on accountofunsteadiness will not bring in the full fruits of yoga.

23 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 13

SAMADHI IS OF TWO KINDS, SAMPRAJNATA AND ASAMPRAJNATA

NOTES AND COMMENTARY

Samadhi means super-conscious state, wherein the yogi gets super-sensual experiences. Samadhi is of two kinds viz., samprajnata or sabija or savikalpa and asamprajnata or nirbija or nirvikalpa. In savikalpa samadhi there are triputi (triad) - the knower, knowledge and knowable. There is alambana (support) for the mind to lean upon. The samskaras (tendencies) are not fried. In nirvikalpa, there is neither triputi nor alambana. The samskaras are fried in toto. The nirvikalpa samadhi only can destroy birth and death, and bring in highest knowledge and bliss. Savikalpa samadhi's of various - kinds - savitarka and nirvitarka, savichara and nirvichara, sa-ananda, and asmita.

When you get full success or perfection (siddhi) in raja yoga by entering into asamprajnata samadhi (nirvikalpa state) all the samskaras and vasanas (conditioning) which bring on rebirths are totally fried up. All vrittis (mental modifications) that arise from the mind-lake - come under restraint. The five afflictions, viz., avidya (ignorance), asmita (egoism), raga-dvesha (love and hatred), and abhinivesha (clinging to life) are destroyed and the bonds of karma are annihilated. Control the mind and the senses, become desireless, develop the power of endurance, contemplate, see the self in the self. Samadhi brings on highest good (nishreyas) and exaltation (abhyudaya). It gives moksha (deliverance from the wheel of births and deaths). The afflictions, egoism, etc., have their root in avidya (ignorance). With the advent of the knowledge of the self, the ignorance vanishes. With the disappearance of the root cause, viz., ignorance, egoism, etc., also disappear.

In the asamprajnata samadhi, all the modifications of the mind are completely restrained. All the residual samskaras also are totally burnt. This is the highest samadhi of raja yoga. This is also - known as nirbija samadhi (without seeds) and nirvikalpa samadhi. Dharma megha in raja yoga means "the cloud of virtue". Just as clouds shower rain, so also this dharma-megha samadhi showers on the yogis omniscience and all sorts of siddhis (powers). Karma is the seed for life state, life period and life experience. Nirbija samadhi will burn all the seeds.

24 MARCH - YOGASARA-UPANISHAD

MANTRA - 14

THE YOGI SEPARATES HIMSELF FROM THE THREE GUNAS (QUALITIES) AND ATTAINS KAIVALYA

Notes and Commentary

By increasing the satvic modifications of the mind such as kshama (forgiveness), love, mercy, magnanimity, generosity, truthfulness, celibacy, you can destroy the rajasic and tamasic mental vrittis. Internal fight is ever going on between gunas - satva, rajas and tamas, between good vrittis and evil vrittis.

If satva predominates in the mind, thoughts of God, Brahma-vichara (enquiry into truth) will manifest. The mind will be one-pointed. The meditative mood will come by itself without any exertion. In spiritual neophytes the satvic state of mind will not last for a long time. Rajas and tamas will try to rush in. You will have to be very careful and vigilant. You will have to watch the mind through careful introspection Your important duty is to increase the satva in the mind. A satvic man will be ever virtuous, God-loving, dispassionate and powerful. A rajasic man will be ever engaged in worldly activities. He wants to lord over people. He has a domineering attitude. He wants powers. He is much attached to wife, children and property. The dross or impurities of the mind - rajas and tamas - should be removed by heating the mind in the fire of vairagya and abhyasa (dispassion and spiritual practices of sadhana). Then alone you will become a dhyana yogi.

Eventually the purusha (soul)realises his own native state of divine glory, isolation or absolute independence (kaivalya). Hehascompletely disconnected himself from the prakrti and its effects. He feels his absolute freedomand attains kaivalya, the highest goal of a raja yogi. All klesha-karmas are destroyed now.Thegunas, having fulfilled their objects of enjoyment and evolution, now entirely cease to act.Hehassimultaneous knowledge now. The past and future are blended into present. Everythingis"now".Everything is "here". He has transcended time and space. The sum-total of all knowledgeofthe three worlds, of all secular sciences is nothing, nothing, compared to the infiniteknowledge of a yogi who has attained kaivalya. Glory, glory to such exalted yogis. May theirblessingsbe upon us all!

25 MARCH - THE SUPREME GIFT

Yoga is the supreme gift of India to the world at large. Yoga does not quarrel with science ; it supplements it. Yoga is a methodical way to attain perfection, through the control of the different elements of human nature -both physical and psychical.

Yoga is the supreme science of contacting reality. It is perfection in action. It is equanimity of attitude. It is perfect peace. Yoga is union with God.

Yoga is not a thing merely to be heard. Yoga is a thing that has to be assimilated and put into practice in daily life. The practice of yoga enables one to realise unity with the whole world. It is living in tune with God.

Yoga is abiding by the principles of truth and avoiding the path of untruth. Yoga is a science which is meant for the study of the reflective. It is for those who are convinced that the world of the senses has nothing substantial to offer.

Yoga is a process of continuous transformation. The inner perfection of self realisation can only come to be revealed by experience. This happens only progressively. The transformation of one's personality is achieved through stages.

As you advance in yoga, the ego is progressively replaced by the spirit. It is through this that the will of God works. By the practice of yoga, the sadhaka (seeker) is freed from the tyranny of the lower mind and he becomes divine. At a later stage the transformation takes the shape of a progressive unfoldment of the spirit.

Apreceptor or guru is indispensable for the practice of yoga. The aspirant should be humble, simple, gentle, refined, tolerant, merciful and kind. You will not have success in yoga if you have desire to get psychic powers.Yoga does not consist of sitting cross-legged for six hours, nor in stopping the heart-beat, noringetting buried in the ground for a week or a month.

26 MARCH - YOGA IS ETERNAL LIFE

Yoga is a perfect and practical system of self-culture. Yoga is an exact science, it aims at the harmonious development of the body, the mind and the soul.

Yoga is the turning away of the senses from the objective universe and concentrating it on the mind within. Yoga is eternal life in the spirit.

Yoga aims at controlling the mind and its modifications. The path of yoga is an inner path, whose gateway is your heart. Yoga is the discipline of the mind, the senses and the physical body. It helps to control and co-ordinate the subtle forces within the body.

Yoga brings perfection, peace and everlasting happiness. Yoga helps you in your business and also in your daily life. Through yoga you can have a calm mind and a peaceful sleep.

Through yoga you can also have increased energy, vigour, vitality, longevity and a high standard of health. Yoga transmutes your animal nature into divine nature. It raises you to the pinnacle of divine glory and splendour.

The practice of yoga will help you to control your emotions and passions. It will give you the power to resist temptations and to remove disturbing elements from the mind.

Yoga enables you to keep a balanced mind always. It removes fatigue. It confers on you serenity, calmness, and wonderful concentration. It will enable you to hold communion with the Lord and thus attain self-realisation.

If you want to attain success in yoga you will have to abandon all worldly enjoyments. You will have to practise tapas, (austerity) and brahmacharya (celibacy).
To curb the mind you have touse intelligent and judicious methods - because, if you use force, the mind becomes more turbulent and mischievous. Those who try to control the mind by force are like those who endeavourto bind a furious elephant with a silken thread.

27 MARCH - WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is the sciencethatteachesustheway,themosteffectiveway,how to remove our defects and weaknesses,andhowtoattainthestateofperfection,freedom and super-conscious blessedness. The state in which there is union with the absolute.

Yoga enablesitsstudentstoacquireperfectcontroloverthephysical body, the mind and the senses. Yogashowsyouthemarvellousmethodofrisingfromeviltogoodness and from goodness to godliness,andthenfromgodlinesstodivinesplendour.

Yogaisasearchfortruth.Itraisesamantospiritualeminence.Thisform of self education is called yoga.Theyogiobservesthelawofmoderationatalltimes.Hetreads the middle path. He does nottorturehisbody,buthedoesregulatehiseatingandsleeping.He does regulate his talking andworking.

Yogaisyouruniqueheritage.Proceeduponthispathgraduallyand steadily. Nothing can be achievedovernight.Butsteadypracticewillcertainlybestowgreatblessings in the long run. Yoga hasanunparalleledutilityandcurativevaluenotyettappedbymodern medical science.

Thepracticeofyogaisnotopposedtoanyreligion.Itisnotopposed to any sacred church. It is purelyspiritualanduniversalinitsteachings.Itdoesnotcontradictanyone's sincere faith.

Yogadoesnotwantyoutoturnawayfromlife;itdemandsspiritualization of life. Yoga brings aboutphysicalandspiritualdevelopment,sidebyside.Andfinally,yoga enables the aspirant to attainblissfulunionwiththesupremebeing.Whenyogagetsripened, it becomes the super-consciousstate.Itbecomesthestatecallednirvikalpasamadhi(realisation of the absolute). Apply yourselftenaciouslytoself-enquiryandmeditation.Bevigilant. Be diligent. Kill thoughts and desires oftheworld,throughholydesires.Slayunholythoughts with holy thoughts. Thus gain victory overyourdestiny.Thereisavastoceanofknowledgewithin you. Unfold. Become a jivanmukta (aliberatedsoul).Remember,Godhelpsthosewhohelpthemselves.

28 MARCH - YOGA

There are people who have not been able to serve their preceptors, who have not done any selfless service, or any devotional practices, who have not had the heart to treat other children with the affection they show to their own, who may not have had the heart to help others who were in severe distress - and yet, they sit and speak high philosophy. They sit and speak of cosmic love, of cosmic vision and of their own spiritual experiences and realisation (brahma jnana). They repeat the mantra Sivoham Sivoham ("I am Siva") - or the mantra Aham Brahma Asmi ("I am the infinite") - every few minutes. They wish to be in contact with great avataras (incarnations of God) this very second.

Place your foot, step by step, very cautiously, on the different rungs of the ladder of yoga. Ascend very gradually to the summit. Be earnest in your sadhana (practice). Equip yourself with the necessary qualifications. Do not waste your time in search of a preceptor. When you are ready, you will enter the halls of wisdom. And there, waiting on the threshold, you will find your preceptor.

Sage Vasishta says: "I assure you. on the authority of my own intuitional knowledge, as well as that of other illumined souls, that the reality can be realised by man. But one who has known it cannot communicate it to others, for want of means." Even the knowledge acquired by the five senses, which are common to all, cannot be communicated to others. You cannot tell the taste of butter to a man who has never tasted it. Nor can you communicate the idea of colour to a man born blind.

All that a teacher can do is to tell his disciple the method of knowing the truth. All he can do is to tell the disciple of the path that leads to unfoldment of the intuitional faculty.

If you have a burning desire, like Lord Buddha, if you possess patience and forgiveness, and if you have devotion to the preceptor - then you can contact avataras and sages right now, this very second.

29 MARCH - UNDERSTAND NATURE

Every man should have a comprehensive understanding of nature's laws, and their operations. Then he can pull on in this world smoothly and happily. He can utilise the helping forces to serve his ends in the best possible manner. He can neutralise the hostile or antagonistic currents. Just as the fish swims against the current, so also he will be able to go against the hostile currents by adjusting himself properly and safeguarding himself through suitable precautionary methods. Otherwise he becomes a slave. He is tossed about hither and thither helplessly by various currents. Various hostile forces drag him in different corners. He drifts like a wooden plank in a river. He is always very miserable and unhappy although he is wealthy and possesses everything that the world can offer.

The captain of a steamer who has a mariner's compass, who has knowledge of the sea, the routes and the oceanic currents can sail smoothly. Otherwise his steamer will drift here and there helplessly and be wrecked by being dashed against some icebergs or rocks. Likewise, a wise sailor in the ocean of this life, who has a detailed knowledge of the laws of karma and nature can sail smoothly and reach the goal of life positively. Understanding the laws of nature, you can mould or shape your character in any way you like. "As a man thinketh so he becometh", is one of the great laws of nature. Think you are pure; pure you will become. Think you are noble; noble you will become. Think you are a human being; human you will become. Think you are Brahman; Brahman you will become.

He who spreads happiness will always get such favourable circumstances as can bring him happiness.He who spreads pain to others will, doubtless, get such unfavourable circumstances, according to the law of nature, as can bring him misery and pain. Therefore man creates his own character and circumstances. Bad character can be transmuted into good character by means of good thoughts, and unfavourable circumstances can be changed into favourable circumstances by doing good actions. O Ram! You must understand the laws of nature and become wise and happy.

30 MARCH - NATURE'S LAWS

The law of compensation operates everywhere in nature's phenomena. The seed breaks and a large tree arises from the seed. There is no loss in the breaking of the seed. Fuel burns. Fuel is destroyed. But there is heat, in accordance with the law of compensation. Many articles are cooked in the fire on account of the heat.

The law of compensation operates in the mental plane also. It keeps up the balance and establishes peace, concord, equilibrium, harmony and justice in nature. Think deeply, cogitate and reflect. You will see that this law of compensation is operating everywhere in the phenomena of nature. It is inexorable and immutable. No on can defy this relentless and irresistible law. If you do an evil act, you will reap a bad fruit in compensation.

If you take an individual life as an isolated event which begins with birth of the physical body and terminates with its death you cannot find any correct explanation or solution for the affairs of life. You will be groping in darkness and despair. Your present life is nothing, when compared with the whole soul-life. It is momentary - a mere fragment. If you want to find the cause or antecedent for anything, you will have to go deep into the affairs of the eternal soul-life. Then alone there will be perfect balance of cause and effect, antecedent and consequence. Life does not end with the disintegration of this physical body alone. There is reincarnation. There had been countless previous lives also. You will have to take into consideration the widest view of the life of the soul. Then you will find a perfect, satisfactory solution for all the intricate and complicated affairs of life.

Every wrong action or crime brings its own punishment in accordance with the law of retribution. The law of causation, the law of action and reaction, the law of compensation and the law of retribution - all operate together. He who hurts another man, hurts himself first. Remember that God is neither partial nor unjust.

Remember that God is not responsible for the wealth of one man or the poverty of another. You suffer on account of your own wicked actions. There is nothing chaotic or capricious in this world. Things do not happen in this universe by accident or chance in a disorderly manner. They happen in regular succession and events follow each other in a regular order. There is a kind of definite connection between what is being done now by you and what will happen in the future. Sow always the seeds which will bring pleasant fruits and which will make you happy herein and hereafter.

31 MARCH - THREEFOLD KARMA

Man is threefold in his nature. He consists of desire or feeling, knowing and willing. These three fashion his karma. He knows objects like chair, tree, etc. He feels joy and sorrow. He wills - to do this, or not to do that.

Behind the action, there are desire and thought. A desire for an object arises in the mind and then you think of ways and means to obtain it. Then you exert to possess it. Desire, thought and action always go together in this process. They are the three threads, as it were, that are twisted into the cord of karma.

Desire produces karma. You work and exert to acquire the objects of your desire. Karma produces its fruits as pain or pleasure. You will have to take birth after birth to reap the fruits of your karmas. This is the law of karma.

Karma is of three kinds, namely, the accumulated works, the works that fructify and the current works. The accumulated karmas have accrued to you from the past. Part of it is seen in the character of man, in his tendencies and aptitudes, capacities, inclinations and desires.

The fructifying karma is that portion of the past karma which is responsible for the present body. It is ripe for reaping and cannot be avoided or changed. It is only exhausted by being experienced. You pay past debts.

The karma of current works is that karma which is now being made for the future. In Vedantic literature, there is a beautiful analogy. The archer has already released an arrow; it has left his hands. He cannot recall it. He is about to shoot another arrow. The bundle of arrows in the quiver on his back is the accumulated work. The arrow he has shot is fructifying work, and the arrow which he is about to shoot from his bow is current work. Of these, he has perfect control over the accumulated and the current works, but he must surely work out his fructifying works. The past which has begun to take effect he has to experience. Fructifying karma cannot be prevented even by the Lord.

1 APRIL - MEANING OF KARMA

Karma is a sanskrittermthatsignifiesactionordeed.Anyphysicalormentalactioniskarma. Thinking is mentalkarma.Karmaisthesumtotalofouracts,bothinthepresentlifeandinthe preceding births.

Karma meansnotonlyaction,butalsotheresultofanaction.Theconsequenceofanactionis really not a separatething.Itisapartoftheactionandcannotbedividedfromit.Thelawof karma meansthelawofcausation.Whereverthereisacause,thereaneffectmustbeproduced. A seed is a causeforthetree,whichistheeffect.Thetreeproducesseedsandbecomesthecause for the seeds.Thecauseisfoundintheeffectandtheeffectisfoundinthecause.Theeffectis similar to thecause.Thisistheuniversalchainofcauseandeffectwhichhasnoend.
No link in thechainisunnecessary.Thisworldrunsonthisfundamentalandvitallaw.Thislawis inexorable andimmutable.Thisgrandlawoperateseverywhereinthephysicalandmentalplanes. No phenomenoncanescapefromtheoperationofthismightylawandallotherlawsofnature are subordinatetothisfundamentallaw.
No event canoccurwithouthavingapositive,definitecauseatthebackofit.Thebreakingoutof a war, the riseofacomet,theoccurrenceofanearthquakeoravolcaniceruption,theoutbreak of an epidemic,thunder,lightning,floods,diseasesofthebody,fortune,misfortune,allhavetheir definite causesbehindthem.
The grandlawofcausationincludesthelawofactionandreaction,thelawofcompensationand the lawofretribution.Alltheselawscomeunderonegeneral,allembracingheading,namely,the doctrine of karma.

If thereisanaction,theremustbeareaction.Thereactionwillbeofequalforceandofsimilar nature.Everythought,desire,imaginationandsentimentcausesreaction.Virtuebringsitsown reward;vicebringsitsownpunishment.Thisistheworkingofthelawofreaction.Godneither punishesthewickednorrewardsthevirtuous.Itistheirownkarmasthatbringrewardand punishment. It is the law of action and reaction that brings the fruits. No one is blamed.

The law operateseverywherewithunceasingprecisionandscientificaccuracy.Thelawofaction and reaction operatesbothinthephysicalandmentalplanes.

2 APRIL - PRACTISE KARMA YOGA

The practice ofkarmayogadoesnotdemandthatyoupossessenormouswealth.Youcanserve with your mindandbody.Ifyoufindapoorsickmanlyingontheroadside,givehimsomewater or milk to drink.Cheerhimupwithsweetencouragingwords.Takehimtothenearesthospital.If you do servicelikethis,yourheartwillbepurified.

If anyoneissufferingfrompaininanypartofthebody,atonceshampoothepart.Whenyou massagehimfeelthatyouareshampooingthebodyoftheLord.Asyoudothis,repeatyour mantra,oranyothernameoftheLord.Alsoprayfromthebottomofyourheart:"OLord!Remove the painofthisman.Lethimrestinpeace.Lethimpossessgoodhealth."

When youmassageanypersonfeelthatitistheenergyfromthecosmicsourcethatisflowing continuouslythroughyourhands.Someneophytesareafraidthattheirenergywillbedepleted by massaginganotherperson.Thisisaseriousmistake.Themoreyougive,themoreyouwillget. You will beintunewiththecosmicenergy.Thisisthedivinelaw.

If you seeamanorananimalwithseverebleeding,ontheroadoranywhere,donotrunhither and thithertofindclothtobandagethem.Atoncetearapieceofclothfromyourshirtanduse that for bandaging.Thisisrealkarmayoga.Thisisatesttogaugeyourheart.Howmanyofyou have donesuchnobleservice?Ifyouhavenotdoneituptillnow-thendoitfromtoday.

God is morepleasedwithsuchserviceofthepoorandthehelpless,thanwithservicedoneby rich peoplewithpompandvanity.

"Do as youwouldbedoneby"-rememberthismottoalways.Youwillnotdoanywrongaction. You will feelunboundedjoy.

Never losetheopportunitytoserve.Servetothesatisfactionofthepersonyouareserving.Itis not enoughtoservehimjusttopleaseyourself.Onlybyselflessservicecanyouattain God-realisation.

If selflessnessbecomesthereligionoftheworld,therewillbeheavenonearth.Whenworkis done as worshipoftheLord,itistransformedfromkarmaintoyoga.Cultivatecosmiclove. Rekindle thelightofloveintheworld.

3 APRIL - THE PRESENT IS SUPREME

In order toattainsuccessinyoga,sadhana(spiritualpractice)isnecessary.Have no patience with theoreticalreligion.Bycontemplatinginaclosedroomforyears,youmaynot advance more than a few steps.Theeffectsofpastactionscanonlybewashedawaybythefresh, virtuous actions in the present-thatis,byservice.Thereisnootherwayofpurifyingyourself. There is no other method ofdestroyingimpureimpressions,anddesires.

No one canachievetheidealsofkarmayogawithoutdestroyingtheego. And the ego, the accumulatedlayersofegoismcannotbedestroyedwithoutthemagicsolvency of service. If one wishes to know,onemustgiveandonemustserve.Totheselfcentred,knowledge will ever be meaningless and empty.

God hasnousefortheso-calledpanditwhomechanicallychantsthescriptures, but who shuts his eyestothesickmanonthewayside.Theself,thesmallerself,ofrajas(dynamism) and tamas (inertia),isalwayspromptingoneforone'sownaggrandisement.Itwishesto enjoy, it wishes to have bhoga(pleasure).Butthebhogaofthethreeworldscannotgiveatenth, a hundredth, of the blissofdivineknowledge.

Karmayogaisverydifficultinthebeginningduetotheego-riddenimpuremind. You have to be strictandfirmwiththemind.Donotlistentoitsselfishpromptings.Drawinspiration and courage fromcommunionwiththeLordinthesilenthoursofprayer,andfromstudying the lives of saints andfromthesacredscriptures.Donotthinktoomuchaboutthismethodof niskamya yoga (the yogaofselflessservice).Justbeginsomewhere.Workwiththerightintention, the right spirit. The way will open before you.

Docharity.Servethesick.Servethepoor.Servethecountry.Serveyourparents. Serve any social orspiritualinstitution.Spiritualiseallofyouractions.Theneveryactionbecomes an offering unto the Lord, when it is performed in the right spirit.

Karmayogaisagreatleveller.Itremovesallillusorydistinctionsanddifferences. It leads to unity and toafeelingofoneness.Itremovesidlenessandinertia.Itgivesyougood health. Plunge yourselfinthepracticeofkarmayoga,theyogaofselflessservice.Gloryto karma yoga which elevates a man to divinity and unity.

4 APRIL - GRADUAL PROGRESS

The mind is soframedthatitcannotworkwithoutexpectationoffruits or anticipation of rewards for actions. Ifyousmilewhenyoumeetyourfriend,youexpecta smile in return. If you give a glass of watertosomebody,youexpectsomethinginreturn.Ifyou salute a friend, you expect him to saluteyouinreturn.Thisistheinbornnatureofaworldly-minded man.

Train themindtoworkdisinterestedly.Disciplinethemindwith patience and perseverance. Worldly-mindedpeoplecannotunderstandthespiritofniskamya seva (unselfish, motiveless service)astheirmindsarechargedwithorevensaturatedwithimpurities. In the beginning all youractionsmaybeselfish.Butifyouworkhardinthefieldofkarma yoga for two years then five actionsoutofahundredwillbeunselfishandninety-fivewillbeselfish. Scrutinise your motives. Purifythem.Strugglehard.

Aftersomeyearsofincessantstruggle,fiftyactionsoutofahundred will be unselfish. A good timewillcomeandallyouractionswillbeunselfishandpure.The time is not very far to reach theidealifyoukeeptheidealinfrontofyoudaily,andifyoustruggle hard and are sincere and earnest in your purpose.

Every workisworshipoftheLord.Inthelightofkarmayogaallactions are sacred. The aspirant who alwaystakesdelightindoingworkwhichisconsideredbyworldly man as 'menial services', and who alwaysdoessuchactswillingly,heandonlyhewillbecome a dynamic yogi. Only he is completelyfreefromconceitandegoism.Onlyhewillhavenodownfall. The canker of pride cannot touchhim.

The worldisnothingbutmanifestationofGod.Serviceofhumanity is service of God. Service is worship. Peopleareimpatient,theyexpecttogetsiddhis(psychic powers) after doing a little service. Buttherealkarmayogi,whoservespeoplewithhumilityand who sees God in every face, is honouredandrespectedbyall.

5 APRIL - SELFLESS ACTION

Karma yoga removestheimpuritiesofthemindandpreparesitforthereceptionofdivinelight, divine grace and divineknowledge.ServiceofhumanityisserviceofGod.Workalwayselevates when it is done in therightspirit,withoutattachmentandegoism.

Karma yoga expandstheheart,breaksallthebarriersthatstandinthewayofrealisingthe ultimate unityandtakesyoutothedoorofintuition.Ithelpsyoutodevelopdivinevirtuessuch as mercy, tolerance,kindness,cosmiclove,patience,self-restraint,etc.Itdestroysjealousy, hatred, maliceandtheideaofsuperiority.Karmayogaistheyogaofselflessaction,withoutthe idea of agencyandwithoutexpectationoffruits.WorkisworshipoftheLord.Thereis indescribable joy in the practice of karma yoga.

A karmayogishouldbeabsolutelyfreefromgreed,lust,angerandegoism.Onlythencanhedo real andusefulservice.Akarmayogishouldhaveanamiable,lovingnature.Heshouldhave perfectadaptability,tolerance,sympathy,cosmicloveandmercy.Heshouldbeabletoadjust himself to the ways and habits of others.

A karmayogishouldhaveanall-embracingandall-inclusiveheart.Heshouldhaveequal-vision. He shouldhaveacoolandbalancedmind.Heshouldrejoiceinthewelfareofothers.Heshould have allhissensesundercontrol.Heshouldleadaverysimplelife.

A karmayogishouldbearinsult,disrespect,dishonour,censure,infamy,disgrace,harshwords, heat andcoldandthepainsofdisease.Heshouldhavegreatpowerofendurance.Heshouldhave absolutefaithinhimself,inGod,inthescripturesandInthewordsofhisguru.Suchamanisa good karmayogiandreachesthegoalquickly.

The man whoservestheworld,reallyserveshimself.Thisisanimportantpoint.Whenyouserve a man, whenyouserveyourcountry,alwaysthinkthattheLordhasgivenyouarareopportunity to improve.Correctandmouldyourselfbyservice.Begratefultothatmanwhohasgivenyoua chance to servehim.

6 APRIL - BE FREE IN ACTION

Every thought and everydeedofyourswillgenerate certain tendencies which will affect your life here and hereafter. If youdogoodactionswith a selfless spirit, you will soar high into the regions of bliss and peace. As yousowsoshallyoureap.

Good actions generategoodthoughts.Wrong actions bring pain, misery and unhappiness. Everyone of us is governedbythelawofaction and reaction. Your present personality is the total result of your previousactionsandthoughts.Your future depends upon your present action. Man moulds his own destiny.

Actions by themselvesdonotbindaperson.It is the attachment and identification in regard to the work that bindsusandbringspainandmisery. It is the motive that binds you. It is the motive that liberates you.

Work, but work withdetachment.Ineveryact kindle the light of divine love. Always remember your essential divinenatureandactintheworld in a spirit of divine dedication. This world is ruled by the Lord's eternallaws.Intheeast,thegreat law of cause and effect is called karma. In the New Testamentthesametruthisexpressedin the words: "Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap". (Gal.6-7).

Actions producesamskara(mentalimpressions) that coalesce and form tendencies. Tendencies develop into habitsandcharacter.Evildeedsgenerate bad character. Actions, without the idea of agency, withoutexpectationoffruits,without attachment to the action, and being balanced in success and failure,willnotbindyou.Selflessactions purify your heart and lead to the attainment of wisdom of theself.

Karma yoga is skillinaction.Itisagreatart.You have to take as much interest in each act that you perform daily,asanartisttakesinhis dearly loved paintings. Note how, after keen deliberation, theartistputsthebrush-hisentire mind is centred on the work in hand - his entire being is focussedonthepainting-heworksself-forgetfully. This should be your attitude. Take this interest in all thatyoudoandatthesametime be detached from all your actions. Then you will not be bound tosamsara(thewheelofbirthand death).

7 APRIL - SERVE SILENTLY

Work for the commonweal; do not work for selfish gains. Give up all profit motives. Work with detachment and you will attain eternal peace and immortality. The wise man does actions but believes himself to be free from actions since he expects no returns there from and has no selfish motive thereto.

Serve without being conspicuous. Serve silently without any advertisement. Without belief in God, without belief in an ordered world you cannot live amicably; you cannot work for the community.

Do what is right and leave the results to look after themselves. Do your duty with more and more confidence in the Lord. Become a lover of humanity. Foster kinship with all humanity.

Feel that the one Lord dwells in all. Feel that it is he who gives you an opportunity to serve him through all suffering mankind. The world is more and more in need of karma yogis.
Humanity is your God and service to humanity is your worship. Self-control is a natural corollary to the spirit of love and service. He who works with his mind detached and free from selfish longings is a real sanyasin.

The spirit of selflessness is the key to success in the yoga of action. Service becomes karma yoga to the extent one practises self-control and self-denial. With all actions done without expectation of reward, you will gradually become satvic (pure). For one who has faith in God, karma yoga becomes easy and purification of the heart is quickly achieved.

Knowledge of atman (self) dawns in that pure mind which is purified by selfless service and devotion to the Lord. When the yogi feels he gets all his power from the Lord - then the 'doership' ego will go.

Selfless service must be basedon sadhana (spiritual practice). You must be regular in your prayers, your meditation, in the repetition of the Lord's name, in enquiry and self-analysis. All these are the inner springs of the rightspiritual bhava (attitude), which is essential to karma yoga.

8 APRIL - BENEFITS OF KARMA YOGA

Karma yogapreparesthemindforthereceptionofthelightofknowledge. It expands the heart and breaksallbarriersthatstandinthewayofunityoroneness. karma yoga is the effective method or sadhana for chitta suddhi (purification of the mind).

Whenthethoughtofdoinggoodtoothersbecomesapartandparcel of man's life, of his very being,thenhewillnotentertaintheleastselfishmotive.Hewilltake immense delight in serving others and in doing good to others.

Thereisapeculiarjoyandblissinvigorousselflessservice.Youget inner spiritual strength and power by performing motiveless and selfless service.

You willdevelophumility,purelove,sympathy,toleranceandmercy. The sense of separateness will beannihilated.Selfishnesswillbeeradicated.Youwillgetabroad and liberal outlook on life, You willbegintofeelonenessandunity.Eventuallyyouwillattainknowledge of the self.

If youreallywanttogrowinthespiritualpath,youmustdoallsorts of service daily, till the end of yourlife.Thenonlyyouaresafe.Donotstopservingwhenyou become a famous yogi. The spiritofservicemustentereverynerve,cell,tissueandboneofyour body. Then you will become a real,full-blownpracticalvedantin.

This isaprayerforkarmayogisbySriSankaracharya:"Thouartatman, buddhi is thy consort Parvati;thepranaisthyattendant;thisbodyisthyhouse;theact of sensual enjoyment is thy worship;deepsleepissamadhi;walkingbymyfeetistheprambulation around thee; all my speechesarethypraise;whateveractionsIperform,areallthyworship, O Lord Siva".

9 APRIL - MIND TO GOD

Give the mind to God and then you will be liberated. You will be free from birth and death. You will get the highest bliss. There is no doubt of this. Worship God in the poor and the sick. Service of the poor and sick is worship of God. Destroy ghrna (disgust and loathing) when you serve the sick. Then you will get chitta suddhi (purity of the mind) quickly. Service of the poor and the sick is a powerful remedy to bring about the purification of the mind.

When you meet a real, sincere karma yogi, who is plodding in the line for six or seven years, you can at once feel his purity, his selflessness, his inner joy, his inner peace, his inner strength, his inner spiritual growth. You can feel his nearness to God. You can see occasional flashes or glimpses of divine light during satvic moments. He has a pleasant feeling of having justified the divine command in the grand plan or scheme of things.

People do not want to remove mala (impurity) by selfless service. They do not want to remove vikshepa (mental distraction) by upasana (worshipful contemplation). They think that service and bhakti are nothing. They at once jump to open the kundalini (the inner spiritual power) and raise the brahmakara vritti (the notion that only Brahman is real). They will only break their own legs. Rather serve and worship. Jnana and yoga will come by themselves. Kundalini will be awakened by itself.

In the neophytes, in the path of karma yoga, the idea of being a separate worker, the idea of agency, may be strong. You feel that you are doing all the works. However, in course of time, when the heart becomes purer and purer, you will actually feel that some higher power, God, is working through you. You will feel that your body and mind are only instruments in his hands.

"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth". St. Matt. VI - 3.

Begging without any selfish motive, is not begging at all. It is pure yoga. It is for spiritual upliftment only. Remember – you cannot deny pain, you cannot wipe away all the pain in the world - but you can rise above pain by recognising your self.

10 APRIL - SERVE WITH YOUR WHOLE MIND

Half-hearted service is no service at all. Give your whole heart, mind and soul when you serve. This is very important when you practise karma yoga.

Some people have their body in one place, mind in another place, and soul in another place. That is the reason why they do not make any substantial progress in the path.

Forget not the goal of life amidst selfish activities. The goal of life is self realisation. Are you attempting to reach the end and aim in life? Are you doing japa (repetition of a name of God)? Are you doing pranayama (yoga breathing)? Are you doing meditation? Have you kept the ideal before your mind's eye? That day in which you do not do any spiritual sadhana (practice) is wasted. Give the mind to God and the hands to work.

You will have to analyse and scrutinise your motives. It is the selfish motive and not the work itself that binds a man to samsmara (world-cycle). Prepare the mind for karma yoga. Selfish work cannot be taken as karma yoga.

Life is very precious. Live in the spirit of the Gita's teaching. Work without expectation of fruits, and egoism. Think you are nimitta (instrument) in the hands of the Lord. If you work with this mental attitude you will soon become a yogi.

Work never degrades a man. Unselfish work is worship. All work is sacred. There is the story of the famous butcher-sadhaka (seeker) of the Mahabharata. He realised God in his butcher's shop - through serving his parents.

Inside, you have got all the materials for wisdom. There is a vast magazine of power and knowledge within you. It wants kindling. Now wake up!

When you work disinterestedly, without any thought of agency, and when you surrender the works and their fruits as ishvararpanam (offering to God), all karmas are transformed into yogic kriya (practice). Walking, eating, sleeping, answering the calls of nature, talking, etc., all become offerings unto the Lord.

11 APRIL - SPIRITOFDETACHMENT

Worldly people are generally elated by successanddepressed by failure. Elation and depression are the attributes of the mind. If you want tobecomeareal karma yogi in the right sense of the term, you will have to keep a balanced mindatalltimes, in all conditions and under all circumstances. This is no doubt very difficult.Butyouwill have to do it anyhow. Then only will you have peace of mind and real lasting happiness.Hewho keeps a balanced mind is a jnani. Karma yoga prepares the mind for the attainmentofjnana. That is the beauty of karma yoga. That is the secret and essence of karma yoga.

There must not be the least attachment to any kind of work. You must be ready to leave any work at any time. There may be a divine call upon you for certain work. You will have to take it up at once without grumbling, whatever the nature of the work may be, whether you are willing or not. You will have to stop it also, if conditions and circumstances demand you to do so. This is yoga. There is no attachment to the work here.

Keep the reason rooted in the self. Have a poised mind amidst the changes of the world. Work for the fulfilment of purposes divine. Do not expect any fruit. Do everything as ishvararpana (offering to God). Work in unison with the divine will for the welfare of the world. Allow the divine energy to work unhampered through you. The moment your egoism comes in, there will be immediate blocking of the free flow of the divine energy. Make your indriya (senses) perfect instruments for his lila (work, play). Keep the. body-flute hollow by emptying it of your egoism. Then the flute-bearer of Brindavan (Krishna) will play freely through this body-flute. He will work through you. Then you will feel the lightness of the work. You will feel that God works through you. You will be washed of all the responsibilities. You will be as free as a bird. You will feel that you are quite a changed being. Your egoism will try to re-enter. Be careful. Be on the alert. By gradual practice and purification of the mind you will become an expert in karma yoga. All your actions will be perfect and selfless. All actionswill eventually culminate in jnana. This is the yoga of equanimity.

12 APRIL - ALL WORK IS YOGA

Every bit of workisyogaforyouwhen you are sincere. Think that the Lord is working through your hands, eatingthroughyourmouth. In the beginning some of your actions may be unselfish. But in the long runyoucandoallactions in an unselfish manner.

Always scrutiniseyourmotives.Every act can be spiritualised when the motive is pure. Work is meditation. Serveeveryonewithintense love, without the idea of agency, without expectation of reward or fruits.

It is selfishnessthathasdeplorably contracted your heart. Selfishness is the bane of society. Selfishness cloudsunderstanding.Selfishness is petty-mindedness. Pursuit of pleasure increases selfishness. Selfishnessistherootcause for human sufferings. Real spiritual progress starts from selfless service. Servethesadhusand sanyasins (holy ones), the bhaktas (devotees) and the poor and sick. Serve themwithbhava,prem and bhakti (inner feeling, love and devotion).

The spirit of servicemustenterdeeply into your very nerves and tissues. The reward is invaluable. Practise and feel thecosmicexpansion and infinite ananda (bliss). Tall talk and idle gossip will not do, dear friends. Evinceintensezeal and enthusiasm in work. Be fiery in the spirit of service!

Have nistha (firm devotion)withGod and cestha (activity) with hands. You will be able to do both these simultaneously. bypractice.The manual work will become automatic, or intuitive. You will have two minds. One portionwillbe at work and three quarters of the mind will be in the service of the Lord - in kirtan, inmeditation, in japa.

A raw, untrained aspirantfeels,"My preceptor is treating me like a servant. He is using me for petty jobs." He who hasunderstood the right significance of karma yoga will take every work as yogic activity or worshipoftheLord. In his vision there is no menial work. In the light of karma yoga all work is sacred.

Is there a greater karmayogithanLord Buddha? He still lives in our hearts because of the spirit of service ingrained in him.Hespent his whole life serving others.

13 APRIL - DYNAMIC PEACE

Lord Krishna expectsustocultivatedynamicpeace.Hedoesnotwantustobeidle for even a single second. Hecharacteriseshis'dearones'asthosewhoareengagedinworking for the commonweal. Suchactivityisknownasthepracticeofyajna,danaandtapas-sacrifice, charity and self-control.

Man shouldpractiseself-control.Manshouldpractisecharity-heshouldgive,give, give. He should givewhateverhehas.Andheshouldtransformallhisdailyactivitiesintoone continuous sacrifice.Heshouldfeelthathe,Brahman,isofferingthevariousactionsinto the infinite Brahman. He should perform all actions in a perfectly unattached manner.
Do yourdutybutinwardlyfeelthatyouareonlyaninstrumentinthehandsoftheLord. Feel that your trueSelf,thegodheadwithinyou,istheeternalwitnessThatiswhyLordKrishna described yoga askarma-kushlam(skillinaction).Karmayogaisanartinitself.

The secretofkarmayogaistocombinedeepinterestwithperfectdetachment. If work is performedforwork'ssake,ifsuchworkisperformedforthesakeofthecommonweal, in a spirit of sacrifice-thenyouwillenjoyanineffablepeace,ablissthatsurpassethallunderstanding, all description.ThegatesofthekingdomofGodwillbethrownopentoyou.Thatiswhat the Lord assures us in the Bhagavad Gita.

Selflessactionsarenotsoullessactions.Putyourheartandsoulintoallthatyoudo. Live in the Lord andrealisethatyouareaninstrumentofhiswill.Whateverisdonewithoutthis realisation is an actperformedinignorance,isanactthatwouldbindyoufastertothewheel of samsara (cycle ofbirthanddeath).
Three thingsarenecessarywhenyoupractisekarmayoga.Youmustbefreefrom egoism; you must not expectanyappreciationfortheworkthatyoudo;andyoumusthaveabalanced state of mind in successandfailure.

14 APRIL - SPIRIT OF SERVICE

Therightspiritinserviceisnecessary.Notthesmallestinsectistobe treated callously. I once foundadrowningwasp.Itookitout,gaveitsomewarmthandprayed for it. For I know that the Lordisthereinthatwasp.Soworkforthebenefitofothers,because they are divinities, not because you want personal glory.

Evenatinybitofserviceinthisspiritwillberecognisedatonce–while thousands of pounds, given with a view to self-advertisement, may earn you little merit.

Thesecretofnishkamyakarma(unselfish,motivelessaction)wasexplained I by Lord Krishna in theBhagavadGita.EveryselflessworkershouldstudytheGitadaily.He can obtain real wisdom fromit.TheGitaisalivetothosewhoarealivetoit.TheGitaisascripture for all time. It is especially addressed to the people of the present age.

Fill your mindwiththethoughtofGod.BedevotedtoGod.Doeverything as God's will. Surrender yourself tohim.Thisis,inshort,thesecretofkarmayoga.Thisistheyoga of synthesis. This is the yoga mostsuitedtothekaliyuga.Ithelpsthedevelopmentofthehuman personality. It leaves no loop-holesformayaorignorancetoenteryou.Itfillseverypartofman with godliness.

The karmayogishouldceaselesslystrivetocultivatedivinevirtuesand to purify his heart. He should havepeacefulnessandmentalequilibriumashisconstantcompanions. Only that person who has foundpeacewithinhimselfandwhoisabletomaintainabalanced state of mind in all circumstances,willbeabletoradiatepeaceandjoyandeven-mindedness.

This peace is notinertortamasic.Thissurrenderisnotfatalism.Cultivate dynamic peace. Do not be idle for a singlesecond.Hewhoisworkingforthecommonwealis dear to the Lord. He is a sage. He is a greatbhakta.Heisagreatkarmayogi.

15 APRIL - ADAPT AND ADJUST

Akarma yogi should adapt, adjust, accommodate, in relation to all and under all circumstances. Heshould share what he has with others. He should be absolutely unselfish. He should keep his senses under control. He should always be truthful and cheerful. He should be social and amiable. Heshould be simple, noble, humble and gentle.

Akarma yogi should bear insult and injury. He should observe brahmacharya. Offer all actions andtheir fruits - body, mind, senses and soul -as flowers at the lotus feet of the Lord.

A karma yogi should feel that the world is a manifestation of God and that he is serving God in all beings. He should discipline the mind and the senses and body. He should develop alertness, decision, discrimination, discernment, forgiveness, patience, mercy, cosmic love, tolerance and equal-vision.

A karma yogi should have a balanced mind. He should be calm, cool and serene always. He should combine bhakti or jnana yogawithkarma yoga. He should be good and do good. He should keep the body strong and healthy-practicing asanas, pranayama, running and physical culture. He should keep a spiritual diaryandstick to all his resolves.

Put your heart and soul in allthatyou do. Remember always that you are serving the Lord himself; through all your actions youareexpressing his will. You should act like a dutiful manager of the absentee landlord's estate.Havethe same attitude towards your worldly concerns that a loving and conscientious nurse hastowards the children entrusted in her care.

Do your duty well, inwardlyfeelthat you are only an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Feel that your true self, the Godheadwithin you, is the eternal sakshi (witness). Live in the Lord. Repeat his name always. Feel thatGoddoes everything. Share all you have - your heart will be purified quickly. Knowledge of theselfwilldescend on you quickly. You will see God in all.

16 APRIL - YOU HAVE FREEWILL

Someignorantpeoplesay:"Karmadoeseverything.Itisalldestiny.IfIamdestinedbymykarma tobelikethisorlikethat,whythenshouldIexert?Itismydestinyonly."Thisisfatalism.Thiswill bringinertia.stagnationandmisery,Thisisperfectmisunderstandingofthelawsofkarma.This isafallaciousargument.Anintelligentmanwillcertainlynotputsuchaquestion.Youhavemade yourowndestinyfromwithinbyyourthoughtsandactions.Youhaveafreewilltochoosenow. Youhavefreedominaction.Arogueisnotaneternalrogue.Puthiminthecompanyofasaint. Hewillchangeinnotime.Hewillthinkandactnowinadifferentwayandwillchangehisdestiny. Hewillbecomesaintlyincharacter.DacoitRatnagarwaschangedintoSageValmikibythecurrent ofRishiNarada.JagaiandMadai,tworoguesofthefirstorderwerechangedbythecurrentof Nityananda,discipleofLordGouranga.Youwillhavetodesire,tothink,andact.Youcanchange karmainanywayyoulike.Youcanbecomeayogiorjnanibyrightdesire,byrightthinkingand by rightaction.YoucanattainthepositionofIndraorBrahmabygoodkarma.Manisnota helpless being. He has free will of his own. Man haspowertochoosebetweenthealternativeswhichfatebringsbeforehim.Inchoosing betweenthemhemayeitherfollowhistendenciesproducedbyhispastactionsorstruggle against them.Thewillofmaniseverfree.Theargumentswhichareadvancedbydeterministsin saying thathumanwillisdeterminedarenotsoundandtenable;theyfalltotheground.

Dear friends!Manisthemasterofhisdestiny.Wakeupnowfromthedeepslumberofignorance. Never becomeafatalist.Thinkrightly,Actrightly.Leadavirtuouslife.Neverhurtthefeelingsof others. Mouldyourcharacter.Purifyyourmind.Concentrate.Thouartnityamuktapurusha(ever free spirit). TatTwamAsiThouartThat.

The samskaras(habit-patterns)ofvirtuousactionsareimbeddedinthechitta.Theyarealso indestructible.Theyarereal,valuableassetsforyou.Theywillpreventyoufromdoingwrong actions. Theywillpushyouontothegoal.Selflessworkswillpreparethegroundofantahkarana (the psyche)forthereceptionoftheseedofjnana.Thepathofkarmayogaeventuallyleadsto the attainmentofinfiniteblissoftheself.

17 APRIL - FREEDOM IN ACTION

Actions which are of a binding nature lose that nature when you do them with equanimity or evenness of mind through the help of pure reason, which has lost all attachment to sensual objects and which is resting in the self. You will have to cultivate and develop this pure reason and equanimity of mind.

God has given this marvellous machine to man for service of humanity and thereby attaining an immortal life. If he uses this body for satisfaction of petty desires and selfish ends, he becomes an object of pity and condemnation. He is caught up in the wheel of birth and death. Rest the mind in the self or God when you perform any action. He who has developed pure poised reason and who is resting in the self, is quite aware that all actions are done by the divine actor within (antaryamin). He is perfectly conscious that God really operates in this body-machine and moves this machine.

This yogi of equanimity or evenness of mind now understands fully the fundamental principles that govern all bodily actions. He performs all actions for God's sake in fulfilment of his purpose without desire for fruit and eventually attains the everlasting peace.

Merit and demerit (punya and papa) do not affect the karma yogi who has evenness or equanimity of mind, for he exults not over the good fruit of the one nor worries over the bad fruit of the other. He has equanimity of mind in success and failure. His mind is always resting in God all the while. Works which are of a binding nature lose that character when performed with a balanced mind. The karma yogi has no attachment to sensual objects. He has purified his mind by constant selfless service. He has given up all idea of agency. He treats the body as an instrument of God, given to him for the fulfilment of his purpose. He attributes all activities to the divine actor within. He who is established in the yoga of equanimity becomes an expert in the science of karma yoga.

18 APRIL - ANASHAKTI YOGA

Ashakti is attachment. Man gets attached to the objects of the world and is bound thereby. He takes birth after birth and is caught in the wheel of birth and death. Attachment is death. Non-attachment is eternal life.

Anashakti is non-attachment. Ashakti is destroyed by vairagya (dispassion) and viveka (discrimination between the real and the unreal). Look at these - birth, death, old age, disease, impermanence, pain, sorrow, misery, worries, anxieties, fears, etc. Thus you will develop non-attachment,

If you abandon attachment to the fruits of your actions, if you are ever content, if you consecrate the fruits of your actions and the actions themselves to the Lord, you will attain emancipation. Actions will not bind you because you are not doing anything, although you go through the motions of doing something. This is anashakti yoga.

Do not hope for anything. Control the mind and the senses. Give up greed and desire. Free yourself from the pairs of opposites. Be balanced in success and failure. Destroy envy. Though you perform actions you are not bound. Destroy attachment. Be harmonious.

Fix the mind on the innermost atman - now you will not be bound. You will attain salvation. Practise this yoga. You will purify your heart and attain the goal of life.

Selfless work is yoga. Work is atma-puja (worship of the self). There is no loss in service. Work is transmuted into jnana (wisdom). See the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter IV Verse 33. "Sarva karmakhalam partha jnane pari samapyate" - all actions, in their entirety, O Partha, culminate in wisdom.

Service of the sick is serviceofthe Lord. There is no yoga greater than relieving human suffering. If you serve a sick man forhalfan hour, it is tantamount to meditating for three hours, or doing japa of Om 21,600 times.Donot think that in service there is loss.

Karma yoga is only a meansto an end. It removes the impurities of the mind. As soon as purification is effected, you willhave to take refuge in vedanta, the path of jnana (self-knowledge).

19 APRIL - ACTION IN ACTION

All actions are done by the gunas (qualities of nature) only. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks: "I am the doer". This is the cause of bondage. The ignorant man identifies the self through the force of avidya (ignorance) with his body, mind and senses which are the products or effects of the three gunas - satva (purity), rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia). Now comes the trouble. If he thinks: "I am the doer", he has to enjoy the good and bad fruits of his actions. He is brought again and again to this mortal plane.

He who sees that prakrti (nature) performs all actions and that the self is actionless, really sees. The wise man who knows the essence of the divisions of the qualities and functions, holding that "the qualities move amidst the qualities" is not attached. He separates himself from the body, mind and organs, He stands as their witness and as a witness of their functions by identifying himself with the pure inner self. He says: "Seeing, hearing, touching, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing the eyes, are functions of the senses. I have nothing to do. They are the dharmas (proper functions) of the senses. I am distinct from the senses, The senses move among the senses. I am nirlipta (untainted). I am asanga (unattached). "This is the drsti (vision) or niscaya (determination) of a jnani. He escapes from the bondage of karma. He is freed from the wheel of birth and death.

Ifyou identify yourself with Brahman and stand as a witness of the activities of prakrti and its effects, mind, senses and body,you will realise "inaction in action". Brahman is niskriya, akarta, niravayava (actionless), (non-doer), (without limbs). But he is the primum mobile. He gives a push and prakrti moves and acts . Hegazes and prakrti moves and acts. Without his presence prakrti cannot do anything. Thereforeitis Brahman only who really does all actions. This is "action in inaction" as taught in the Gita.

20 APRIL - LET GOD DO EVERYTHING

When the sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) has combined bhakti yoga and karma yoga, he feels that God does everything, that he is an instrument in the hands of God. Thus he slowly frees himself from the bonds of karma and attains freedom through action.

When the sadhaka combines jnana yoga with karma yoga he feels that prakrti (nature) does everything. He feels that he is the silent witness of the activities of the mind, the senses and the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep).

The karma yogi feels the indwelling presence everywhere. He develops adaptability, He shares all he has (physical, mental and spiritual) with others. He observes strict brahmacharya. He offers all his works unto the Lord. Before going to sleep he says: "O Lord, whatever I have done today, is done as worship of thee. May thou be pleased to accept it." Thus he burns the fruits of action, and he is no longer bound.

The karma yogi attains freedom through action. Thus he gets purity of heart and, through purity of heart, he attains knowledge of the self.

Some aspirants are humble at the beginning of their career. But, when they get name, fame, some followers, some disciples, they become victims of pride. Now they cannot do any service, they cannot carry anything on their heads or even in their hands.

The yogi that carries the baggage with joy and feeling, amidst a multitude of admirers, without making any show of humility, must be admired.

"Restraining and subduing the senses, regarding everything equally, rejoicing in the welfare of all, these alone come to Me." (Bhagavad Gita Chapter XII. Verse 4). Such a man becomes a good karma yogi. He reaches the goal quickly.

21 APRIL - WITNESS CONSCIOUSNESS

The student of vedanta (the path of pure wisdom) develops sakshi bhav (witness consciousness) through discrimination and self-analysis. The devotee develops nimitta bhava (the attitude "I am an instrument in the hands of God") and surrenders everything at the lotus-feet of the Lord. Thus they attain a mental attitude of non-attachment to actions and their fruits.

This is the attitude of a karma yogi:

- "God alone is. God alone acts. Not even a piece of straw moves without his will."
- "He is the doer. He alone is the enjoyer. I am but an instrument in his hands."
- "He is the power that resides in the senses and the mind; the power of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling - all these belong to him."
- "He utilises my mind and senses and works out his will. "
- "My body, mind and senses belong to him alone."
- "All actions are done by the qualities of nature only. It is nature (prakrti) that acts. It is prakrti that works."
- "I am the pure atman, the eternal self. I am asanga, akarta, abhokta (unattached, non-doer, non-experiencer). I am the silent witness."
- "I am distinct from the mind and the senses. I am the eternally pure, perfect, immortal atman."

While serving others, the vedantin (the student of vedanta) should visualise his self in others and the bhakta should see the Lord in other faces.

Understand these bhavas (attitudes) fully. Meditate on them daily. Act accordingly, without attachment to or identification with the work, You will soon attain God-realisation. This is jnana - this is the jnana-agni (fire of wisdom) which burns the fruits of all actions and liberates you from bondage.

In the practice of karma yoga,there is no loss of effort. There is no harm. There is no transgression also. Even a little practice canprotect you from great fear of birth and death with its concomitant evils. You will doubtless reapthe fruit of jnana (self knowledge) in this path of karma yoga. There is no uncertainty here. Matteris indestructible. Energy is indestructible. Even a little practice with the right mental attitude willpurify the chitta (heart and mind).

22 APRIL - OBSTACLES AND REMEDY

Be wise. Discriminate. Analyse. Scrutinise your thoughts daily. Boldly proclaim: "I would devote my entire life to the service of others – no matter whether I achieve salvation or not. Salvation is not my concern. My duty is to serve the Lord in all; to serve the sick and the poor, untiringly; to saturate my entire being in the service of others." This should be your bold proclamation at all times - to everyone with whom you come into contact.

Even while you work you should feel: "I am not hungry, it is the function of the prana to feel hungry. I do not see anything, it is the function of the eye to see. Exhilaration and depression belong to the mind, not to me. I am the witness (sakshi) of everything." Through such regular vichara (ratiocination), you will soon attain samadhi (self-awareness).
A karma yogi must be a hero. He will come across many difficulties and obstacles - he must conquer them one by one. He must do this with an undaunted spirit, He must do it boldly.

There are five obstacles that a man has to face when he does karma yoga in the world, even after he has attained purity of heart. They are:

1. Dispassion wanes by contact with sense-objects - downfall comes.

2. Thoughts of the reality of the world creep in.

3. Remembrance of Brahman vanishes.

4. You cannot keep up the brahmakaravritti (thought of Brahman) for a long time, owing to vikshepa (tossing of the mind).

5. During work, the idea of duality and triputi (seer, sight, and seen) come in.

To become humbler than a blade of grass - this should be your ideal. Then you will develop patience, understanding, and you will have goodwill on all sides, from everyone. You should introspect in silence and solitude. Analyse points of criticism. Solitude will calm your emotions. The conclusions you arrive at will be sound.

Karma yogis should never lettheir emotions and excitement get the better of them. By following these instructions any action,sacred or secular, even if it is service of the family, may be converted into an act of worship leadingto the most sublime goal of self-realisation.

23 APRIL - PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

Here are some instructions to a karma yogi. Do not make any difference between menial and respectable work. Fix the mind on the Lord and give the hands to work. Sing God's name while serving others.

Feed the Door. Clothe the naked, Comfort the distressed. Do actions as your duty. Do not expect any thanks or appreciation, applause, salute, for your work. Spend one tenth of your income on charity. Share what you have with others. Always scrutinise your inner motives. Annihilate all selfish motives.

Give up abhimana (identification, pride) of all sorts. Never feel, "I have helped that man". Always think, "The Lord has given me an opportunity to serve him". Always be on the look out for ways to serve and never miss one single opportunity.

Do not be attached to the work - you must be able to give it up at any moment. Discipline the body and the mind again and again for fiery service. Non-attachment to work does not mean indifference.

Develop a passion for self-realisation, for freedom from birth and death, for liberation from bondage. One strong holy desire annihilates all worldly desires. This will help your progress towards freedom. Understand the theory of karma and cut the three knots - ignorance, desire and selfish action. Then you are beyond the law of karma. Then you are a liberated sage. This is your foremost duty. All other duties are self-imposed through attachment, ignorance and delusion.

Be equanimous in all conditions, knowing that they are nothing but the fruits of your own past actions, Be indifferent to thepairs of opposites. Always be rooted, inwardly, in the self. Always be blissful. Radiate bliss and joy.Now none is foe, none is stranger. Feel and see the self in all beings. Be devoted to the well-beingof all humanity. Love for love's sake. Work for work's sake.

24 APRIL - BASIC KIRTANS OF SIVANANDA

Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Eat a little, Drink a little, Speak a little, Sleep a little Mix a little, Move a little, Serve a little, Think a little, Give a little, Work a little, Rest a little, Worship a little. Do Asan a little, Pranayam a little Meditate a little, Do Vichara a little. Do Japa a little, Do Kirtan a little, Write Mantra a little, Reflect a little. Purification, Concentration, Reflection, Meditation. Selflessness, Self-surrender, Self-
purification, Self-realisation.

Do self-sacrifice, Effect self-surrender, Have self-restraint. You will have self-realisation. Speak sweetly, Speak truthfully, Think correctly, Believe faithfully.

Serve selflessly, Pray devotedly, Meditate ceaselessly, Realise perfectly.

Think no evil, See no evil, Hear no evil, Talk no evil.

Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise Be good, Do good, Be kind, Be compassionate.

Practise Ahimsa, Satyam Brahmacharya This is the foundation of Yoga-Vedanta.

Practise Shravan Manan Nididhyasan You will attain Brahma Saksatkara

Find the knower, Find the hearer Find the seer, Find the smeller Find the taster, Find the feeler You will attain self-realisation.

Sarva Dharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja Aham Tva Sarva Papebhyo Mokshayasyami Ma Sucha.

Om Tat Sat Om Om Santi Om

Om Tat Sat Om Om Santi Om

Hari Om Tat Sat Om Sri Om Tat Sat Om

Siva Om Tat Sat Om Om Tat Sat Om.

25APRIL-SONG OF INSTRUCTIONS

Mohanabansiwaletumkolakhoupranamtumko lakhou pranam
Sankar bholevale tumko lakhou pranam
Tumkolakhonpranampyarekaroronpranam
Bhajo Radhe Govinda
Radhe Govindabhajo RadheGovinda,
Radhe Govinda bhajo Sita Govinda
Hari bolo, bolo bhai Radhe Govinda
HareKrishnaHareRamRadheGovinda.
Get up at 4 a.m. Brahmamuhurta,
Get up at 4 a.m. Japo Rama Rama,
Getupat4a.m.DoBrahmaVichar,
Get up at 4 a.m. enquire 'Who am I'?,
Get up at 4 a.m. Practise Yogabhyas.

Observe Mauna daily for two hours,
Fast onEkadasi,takemilkandfruits,
Study dailyonechapterofGita,
Do regularcharity,one-tenthincome,
Rely on yourownself,giveupservants,
Do Kirtanatnight,haveSatsang.

Speak thetruthatallcosts,preservevirya,
Satyam Vada,DharmamChara,ObserveBrahmacharya.
Ahimsa ParamoDharma,Loveoneandall,
Never hurt othersfeelings,bekindtoall,
Control anger byKsamadevelopVishwaPrem.
Keep daily spiritualdiary,youwillevolvequickly.

(Hare Krishna HareRam.....)

26 APRIL - SONG OF CHIDANAND

Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda Hoon
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hoon
Ajarananda Amardnanda Achalananda Hoon
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hoon

Antarai

Nirbhaya aur Nischinta Chidghanananda Hoon
Kaivalya Kevala Kutastha Ananda Hoon
Nitya Suddha Siddha Satchidananda Hoon
Knowledge Bliss, Knowledge Bliss, Bliss Absolute,
In all conditions I am Knowledge, Bliss Absolute.
I am without old age, without death, without motion
In all conditions, I am Knowledge Bliss Absolute.

Antarai

Am without fear without worry, Bliss Absolute
Existence Absolute
Knowledge Absolute
Independent, Unchanging, Non-dual Atma
Immortal Atma
Advaita Atma
Eternal pure, perfect Knowledge, Bliss Absolute
(Chidananda .....)

Sivananda Sivanand Sivananda Hoon
Aghadbhumwala Aghadbhumwala Akhilananda Hoon
Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda Hoon
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hoon
Nijanand Nijanand NijanandaHoon
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hum.

27 APRIL - WHAT IS DEVOTION?

Make use of this precious humanbirthfortheachievementofthissupremepurpose-God-realisation. Pray to the Lord to makeyoudesireless.Buthaveonestrongdesireandletitbefor attaining self-realisation. Throughalifeofdevotion,service,purification,charity,sadhana (spiritual practice) and meditationattainthehighestselfrealisationanddwellinthesupreme peace and bliss (paramananda).

Devotion is supremeloveoftheLord,supremeattachmenttotheLord.ThenotionofGodmeans an absolutely perfectbeing,whohasallthepossibleattributes,includingtheattributeof existence; so Godmustexist.TheexistenceofGodcannotbeprovedbyrationalarguments.Itis purely a questionoffaithandreferstotheintuitivesideofman.

The deepestcraving,thedeepestaspirationinmanisforeternalhappiness,eternalknowledge and eternaltruth.Manshouldsearchforsomesupernaturalentitywhichcansatisfyhisdeepest aspirations.

As weexplaineverythingwithinnaturebythelawofcauseandeffect,soalsothenatureasa wholemustbeexplained.Itmusthavesomecause.Thiscausemustbedifferentfromtheeffect. It mustbesomesupernaturalentity,i.e.God.Natureisnotamerechancecollectionofevents,a merejumbleofaccidents,butanorderlyaffair.Theplanetsmoveregularlyintheirorbits,seeds growintotreesregularly.Seasonssucceedeachotherinorder.Now,naturecannotorderitself.It requires the existence of an intelligent being, i.e. God, who is responsible for it.

Everythinginnaturehassomepurpose.Itfulfilssomefunctionorother.Certainlyeveryobjectby itself cannotchooseafunctionforitself.Theirdifferentfunctionsoughttohavebeenplannedor designedbyasingleintelligentbeingorGod.Youcannotexploreorprobeintotheiila(sportive play) ofGod.Youmustacceptitwithfaithandreverence.

What isthenatureofGod?GodisloveandloveisGod.Godisthesourceforthisworld,body, mind, pranaandsenses.Godgiveslighttothemind,sun,moonandstars.Godisyouronly redeemer, refuge. God is your real father, mother, guru, friend and relative.

God is theonlyreality.Godisthedispenseroffruitsofactions.Godisthedesignerandarchitect of the universe.Godisimmanentandtranscendent.Godisunchanging,undecayingand imperishable. God is the supreme goal, beauty, truth.

28 APRIL - PHILOSOPHY OF BHAKTI

Bhakti or devotionisindispensableforattainingjnana.Jnanaistheconditionnecessary for bhakti to reach its fullestdevelopmentinlove.Knowledgewithoutdevotionisasfutile as devotion without knowledge.

Love follows from thebasiconenessofallbeings.Godisbeing.Worldisbecoming. The creation of the world does notinanywayaffecttheintegrityofGod.Theworlddoesnotstand apart from God, but is pervadedbyhim.

Bhakti is not mereemotionalismbutistheturningofthewillaswellastheintellect towards the divine. The idealdevoteeisakarmayogiaswellasajnanayogi.Bhaktioriginates in knowledge, is essentially ofthenatureoflove,andburstsforthinselflessaction.

True love givesthehighestwisdom,Diffusedloveiswisdom.Concentratedwisdom is love. True wisdom vibratesinthehearer.Bhaktibeginswithemotionaldualismandculminates in monism. Lover and theloved,thedevoteeandtheobjectofdevotion,arefusedintoonespiritual ecstacy.

All creation isthefamilyofGod.Thisworldissustainedbythepowerof God.The deepest urge of life is to knowGodandtoliveinGod.God'swillistheverylawwhichgovernsthe universe. All beings are guidedandcontrolledbythedivinewill.

Life on this physicalplaneisamerepreparationfortheeternallifeinGod.Thoughthe Lord resides in all creatures andthings,thereisadifferenceinthedegreeofHismanifestation in them. In human beings theLordismoremanifestthaninothers.And,amonghumanbeings, He is more or less manifest accordingtothedegreeofknowledgeorconsciousnessthatisrealised.
He who follows the pathofmeditationknowshisselfasdivineandonewithGod. Any man or woman has equal right tofollowthepathofdevotion.Thegreatestsinnercanpractise devotion and attain God-realisation.Thoughunborn,Godtakesbirthasanavatara(incarnation) to destroy the wicked, to protect virtueandtoestablishdharma(righteousness).

29 APRIL - GOD IS ALL IN ALL

There is one God. He is above all, in all, through all. He is all in all. In God all are united. God is the essential power and reality in all things. God is one, God is the all-pervading spirit and life of the universe.

God is the inner soul of all alike. In every form behold the blessed Lord himself. That is my yoga. Cows are of diverse colours but all milk is alike. The kinds of flowers vary, yet all worship is one. There is but one God - the creator, the governor of the world, almighty, eternal, incomprehensible. God is almighty - he governs every action in the universe. Not even an electron can move without his will.

God is always just. God is truth. God is love. God is absolute good, know that everything is vanity except God. God can be attained by truthful behaviour, by leading a highly moral life and by the acquisition of knowledge. God's way is mercy. God's name is love. God's first manifestation was sound.

In the eternity of God is real life. In truth God is eternal light. In the goodness of God is eternal bliss, peace and joy. God is near at hand to help you in your difficulties.
Difficult it is to get a human birth. Difficult it is to get a guru (spiritual preceptor). Difficult it is to attain God-realisation. But, through the grace of God, you can overcome all difficulties.
You have the urge of hunger and there is food to appease that hunger. You have the urge of thirst and there is water to quench that thirst. There is the urge to be always happy and there must be something to satisfy that urge. This 'something' is God.

Appeal. Knock. You will be heard. The door shall be opened unto you. Do not seek him far and wide - He is in your own heart - He has his dwelling there.

God is the great deliverer. Surely, He is near at hand to help you in your difficulties. God is the bread of life eternal. This bread is more than anything else. It is more abundant life.
God is the embodiment of happiness. Realise God and you will enjoy eternal happiness.

30 APRIL - THE NATURE OF GOD

God is self-luminous and self-existent. God is eternal, perfect, pure, free and all pervading. God is beginningless and endless. God is without pain, sorrow, fear, passion, caste, creed, sex and colour.

God is the indweller of your heart, God is the controller and governor of this world, body and mind. God is the centre of the whole of creation. He is the first causeless cause.

That supreme source of life is God. The Lord has become all. He permeates all. He is all in all. God is the way, the source, the goal, the truth and the life. God is with form and without form - like ice and steam.

God is your sole refuge, benefactor and master. God reveals himself to you in the form in which you love Him most. God cannot be comprehended but can be realised.

God sees without eyes, hears without ears, works without hands and tastes without tongue. God is unknowable through intellect but is knowable through intuition. The law and the law-giver are one - the eternal law is God himself.

God is near and far. He is nearer to the pure and sincere, but farthest to the passionate God witnesses all your thoughts and actions. God is your unseen guest at every meal. God is the head of your house. The reality of God is his universal existence (sat).

God is not responsible for the wealth of a man or for the poverty of another. Everyone bears the fruits of his karmas. God is the greatest doctor, the greatest engineer. He is the greatest mathematician.

God is the enjoyer and He is the object enjoyed. God is the high and He is the low. He is the knower and He is the known. God is the word spoken and He is the breath which speaks it.

God is the manifest and He is the unmanifest. God is the breath of all breath, the prana (life) of all pranas, the self of all selves.
He is the one ultimate truth, unborn, undying, everlasting, ever-existent, subtle and devoid of pain and sorrow.

1 MAY - THE GLORY OF GOD

God has no purpose. God is not bound by any action, just as the sun is not bound by the activities of the people of this world. God acts out of compassion for the individual soul. His sole purpose is to see that His creatures evolve spiritually.

God is the lover and the beloved at the same time. Justice, love, and goodness are expressions in the divine will.

In the word 'Bhagavan'-'bhaga' signifies the six qualities of God. These are: jnana (wisdom), vairagyam (dispassion)kirti(fame), Sri (prosperity or wealth, divine aishvarya), shakti or bala (omnipotence),anddharma(righteousness),

According tothePrasnopanishad there are fifteen kalas or rays of God. These are: prana (life), faith, sky, air,fire,water,earth,senses, mind, food, strength, penance, mantra (mystic formula), karma (action)andname.

God has handsandfeeteverywhere. He has heads and eyes, mouths and ears everywhere. He is immanent intheworld-possessing the vast whole. God breathed into man the breath of life and man becamealivingsoul.

Pleasureisduetovirtuousactions and pain is due to vicious actions. Virtue and vice constitute adrsta(unseenpotency).Thevarious experiences of man are due to this adrsta. But adrsta is a blindforce-itneedsanintelligent director to guide it. And that intelligent director is God.

Godistheverityofallverities.There is a moral and spiritual order through which is fulfilled the willoftheLordintheworld.God has created not only the world, He has also created time along withit.God'sknowledgeiseternal, complete and perfect.

WhocanknowthewillofGod?He who knows God, he alone can know His will. God and His will are one.TheLordisthesupreme healer - He is the divine indweller in all medicines.

2 MAY - GOD INDWELLS ALL THINGS

God is the subtle essence underlying all things. God is the salt of life. The Lord is the source of life and bliss. He is all in all, He is indivisible, indefinable. He is the only reality. His light pervades every being.

God creates the world and remains as its inner ruler. He also rises above the world. God is never involved in samsara (or the world process). God is the 'unmoved mover'. God desires and wills but does not experience pleasure or pain. God is not touched by evil. He is free from hate. God joins in himself all contraries and contradictions.

God is immanent in the world. He is also transcendental. He is the inner ruler of all souls. He is their goal also. God is both immanent and transcendent - He is in the world but also rises above it. The one God is hidden in all things. He pervades all things. He is the inner ruler of all things. He lives in all things. He is the soul of all.

God is within you. He dwells in your heart. Within everyone is this divine spark. Look above the beauty of the objects to the beauty of the cause, that which brought these beautiful objects into being. Feel God. See God in the rising sun and in the setting sun. See God in the little flowers. Talk to Him in the flowers. Have silent communion with God and His secrets or laws will be revealed unto you.

God is the source and strength of all life. He is the abode of bliss, peace and light. Everything in this world is a manifestation of the Lord, All joys and all sufferings are also the Lord's manifestations.

Divine will is an eternal, unalterable law. Surrender your will at the feet of the Lord. You will know the divine will. Or, identify yourself with God, then the divine will will be known. Mysterious, ever eluding comprehension, ever receding further and further, subtle, inexpressible, invisible and yet all-pervading, knowable only through intuition, devotion and purity - such is the Lord of the universe.

It is by the power of God alone that all spiritual people do their spiritual activities in this world of the pairs of opposites. God is revealed through the laws of nature and through the splendour of the human intellect.

3 MAY - GOD IS INFINITE

God is infinite. He is the indwelling presence. He has no limit. He dispels the fear of the devotees. He is an ocean of mercy and bliss. He is an ocean of limitless love. God is immutable. He is the giver of all happiness. God fulfils the desires of his devotees. He is the only shelter in danger.

God is the supreme resort of those who aspire for the highest bliss or final beatitude. He is mother, father, real friend, true preceptor and the supreme deity.

God is a mystery. His grace and ways are a greater mystery. God is the unchanging, unfading, eternal, almighty, all-wise, all-loving one - our refuge and our solace. God is our blissful, immortal abode where no danger can touch us, where no calamity can overwhelm us and where no thieves can attack us.

Know that everything but Godisvanity,Lovenonebut God. Hear none but God. Think of none but God. See none but God.TobeintunewithGodis to be like God. The first approach to God is sincerity and earnest love forhim.

To know God is to love him.Themoreyouknowhim the more you must love him. To know yourself is to know God, forthenyouperceiveyour relation with him. The more we develop ourselves, the more we findourselvesfilledwithlove for him.

Speak to the Lord - not withthelipsbutwiththeheart. Day by day feel closer to God. Day by day feel more and more your onenesswithalllife.Walkclose to God at all times . See all things in the light of truth and thus youwillfindfreedom,the fullness of life, perfection and absolute independence. How to attaintheLord?Heisthemeans himself - for all gifts flow from Him.

The real teacher is God. Helivesinyourheart.Seek Him. Find Him. Enter into Him. And rest peacefully, for ever. The Lordiswithinyou.Hehasyour souls as his abode.

God is the soul of your soul.Heistheselfofall.Offer everything to Him, unreservedly. Seek and you will find Him in your ownheart.

4 MAY - DIVINE WISDOM

There is nothing eternal but He and there is noGod besides Him. He is neither body, nor shape, nor form, nor person. He is chaitanya (or absolute pure consciousness). God is formless and yet He is the form of all forms.

God's beauty is love and His love is beauty. There is a power higher than yours, little man! Some of your desires are realised but many are thwarted. There is an over-ruling power which brings results and consequences, irrespective of your wishes and volition. This power is God.

Man has no volitional power or control over events. He is not a dictator of the future. God draws him hither and thither as he deserves. When there is an engine, there must be an engine-driver to control and direct it. Mind is the greatest engine and the engine-driver is God - He is the mind of all minds.

God possesses the eight supreme attributes: absolute self-control, absolute purity, absolute intuition, omniscience, absolute freedom, boundless grace, omnipotence and boundless bliss. Mind is a power of God. Energy is a power of God. Matter is a power of God. God is not only all-power, all-wisdom, he is all-embracing love who freely gives his grace. Love is joy - the divine power is wisdom and love combined. There is no separation between divine power, wisdom and love. There is no copyright in God - His property is for universal use. Tulsidas and Mira saw God with their fleshy eyes - you too can see God with your normal eyes. You must go through the necessary disciplines and destroy egoism.

My God thou art my hope, my rest, my delight, my centre, my ideal, my goal, my soul, my all-in-all.

O Lord! I am in you and you are in me. I am He whom I love and He whom I love is I.

O wisdom divine! Enlighten my mind.

O love divine! Fill my heart with purity.

5 MAY - LOVE LEADS TO GOD

Truth, mercy, humility, self-control, purity, devotion, courage, dispassion, discrimination, serenity, equilibrium are the doors to liberation. Contentment is the greatest virtue - it makes a man richer than an emperor. It brings every blessing and everlasting peace. Bearing insult and injury is saintliness. Justice, mercy, compassion, honesty, selfless service, sacrifice, self-restraint, are the ingredients or limbs of "Be good, do good", yoga.

Self-control, charity, courage, compassion, humility, non-violence, truthfulness, purity and serenity are the cardinal virtues. Self-control means the control of the lower self by the higher self for the realisation of the self. The five virtues that lead to supreme blessedness are: truth, integrity, kindness, generosity and gentleness. Humility is the arch enemy of egoism. Therefore cultivate humility and egoism will perish. True humility is a mighty spiritual force. It is born of supreme realisation.

Courage, humility, purity, love andtruthfulnessare the real virtues of a man. Vrata is the practice of self-denial - it is a vow. Thereisaspiritofrenunciation in every individual. It develops will power. Obedience is better thanreverence.Obedience is better than sacrifice. Obedience is the secret of discipline. Kindnessandlovearethefoods which sustain the soul within each one.

Is there one single virtuethatwillcontributetomake the world a better place or a happier place? Is not unselfishness thatvirtue?Disinterestedkindness is the highest virtue.

The nearest approach totruthorGodisthrough love. Faith, devotion and love are immortal sisters. Love of God arisesintheheartthatisdesireless. Love divine is the only solvent - the one great healer and forgiver.Loveopensthedoorsof intuition. Love is the marriage of the individual soul and the supreme soul.Thefirstconditionof union with God is a state of love.

6 MAY - LOVE IS THE PANACEA

He who hasnolovecannotknowGod-forGodislove.Loveisthegreatestforceinthisworld. Love is immortal.LoveisGod.WhereloveisthereGodis.Thereforebecomeanembodimentof love. LoveisGod.Loveislight.Lightiswisdom.Wisdomisdivinelife-itisoneness,unity. The

deeperaman'sloveofGodis,thegreaterishisspiritualknowledge.Thefinalconsummation of the loveofGodisunionwithGod.LoveofGodisnoteasilyacquiredbyself-effort-itisinborn in man byvirtueofhisspiritualevolution. Love

Godalone.Bedetachedandrenounceeverythingforthesakeofloveof God.Cosmiclove expectsnotanyreward.Itexcludesnonebutincludesall.Developmoreandmorepuredivine love. Thentheinnerlightwillshinemorebrightly.Cultivatedivinelove.Thisselflessloveisagreat treasure - a pearl of great price.

CultivateanabidingfaithinGod'slove,mercyandgrace.Theloverhimselfbecomesthebeloved of his heart.Theirloveissodeepandintensethattheymergeineachotherandthenagainre-emerge. They are the two inseparable aspects of the one.

Love enviesnot.Loveresentsnot.Loverevengesnot.Lovebargainsnot.Godinhisboundless love and mercypromptlychastisesproudandarrogantpersons,thuspavingthewayforareturn to humility.

God revealshimselfdailytoeveryhumanbeing-butmanshutshiseyesanddoesnotseeHim. Infinite is God.InfiniteareHisaspectsandinfinitearethewaystoreachHim.Thedivinebeingis a living reality,apowerfulpresencethatrespondstoourprayers,anall-pervadingdelightof existence thatsustainsourlife.
Find God withinyourselfinsilence.

Love is the cureforallevil.Thepoweroflovecantransformtheuniversewhichisfetteredin chains of hatred.Loveisall-purifyingandall-redeeming.Loveisthegreatestpurifyingforceinthe world. Love is thegreatestcreativeforceintheworld.

7 MAY - TO LOVE MAN IS TO LOVE GOD

To lovemanistoloveGodalone.Manisthetrueimageof God.Heishisamsa(part).IntheGita you willfind:"Aportionofmineownself,transformedintheworldoflifeintoanimmortalspirit, drawetharounditselfthesenses,ofwhichthemindisthesixth,veiledinmatter."ChapterXV-7. And: "Knowledgeofsacrifice(adhiyajnaspeaksofMeaswearingthebody,Obestofliving beings." Chapter VIII - 4.

Love isthefulfillingofthelaw.Theaimofcharitysocialservice,altruism,humanitarianism,and so manyother'isms',istodevelopthisuniversallove,toexpandone'sheartadinfinitum. Theosophyspeaksofuniversalbrotherhoodandtriestouniteallthroughthecommonthreadof cosmiclove.Loveisagreatleveller.Thereisnopoweronearthgreaterthanlove.Youcanconquer this worldevenifyouhaveonerayofthisdivinecommoditywhichisabsolutelyfreefromevena tinge ofselfishness.PureloveisararegiftofGod.Itisthefruitofone'suntiringserviceof humanity and incalculable virtuous actions in several incarnations. It is rare indeed.

He who possessesevenarayofthisisaveritableGodonearth.Heisamightypotentate.St.Paul says: "ThoughIspeakwiththetonguesofmenandofangels,andifIhavenotlove,Iambecome as soundingbrassoratinklingcymbal,AndthoughIhavethegiftofprophecyandunderstandall mysteriesandallknowledge,thoughIhaveallfaith,sothatIcouldremovemountains,andhave not love,Iamnothing.AndthoughIbestowallmygoodstofeedthepoorandthoughIgivemy body tobeburned,andhavenotlove,itprofitethmenothing,”

True religiondoesnotconsistinreligiousobservances,bathsandpilgrimagesbutinlovingall. Cosmic loveisall-embracingandall-inclusive.Inpurelovenooneisshutoutfromitswarm embrace.Itiswideenoughtoincludethehumblestofus,fromthetinyanttothemighty elephant,fromthecondemnedprisonertothemightyemperor,fromtheworstscoundrelonthe surface oftheearth,totherepute dsaint.

It is hatredthatseparatesmanfromman,nationfromnation,countryfromcountry.Itispride and egoismthatdivideonemanfromanotherman.Hatred,pride,egoismallarementalcreations - the productsofignoranceonly.Theycannotstandbeforepurelove.Justasdarknessisdispelled by the penetratingraysoftheburningsun,soalsojealousy,hatredandegoismaredispelledby the rays of divinelove.

8 MAY - UNSELFISH LOVE

The innate nature of all beings is to love an external object - we cannot but cherish something in the heart. For, truly, the absolute alone is existent. Man is only an ego, apparently separated from it.

Love forexternalthingsisanunconsciousinternalurgetobecomeunifiedwitheverything.For, in reality,maniseverything,theabsoluteitself.Loveistheforerunnerofexperience.Loveisthe cravingandexperienceisthefulfilmentofit.Nonecanlivewithoutloveforsomething."The creatorpiercedthesenseswithoutwardactivity",andthatruleappliestooneandall.Themind is themainsenseofperception,foritisonlythemindthatperceivesthroughthevariouschannels of thesenses.Thesensesdonotworkwhentheminddoesnot.

Emotionsaregenerallyconsideredasahindranceinperfectrealisation,butonlycertainemotions areofabindingnature.Certainotherswillliberatethejiva(soul)frombondage.Theconception ofGoddoesnotrouseinmananybindingemotion-itispureemotion,withoutcarnalityor attachment.LoveforGodrousesthepurestemotions;thisisthesignificanceofdivineemotion in bhakti.

LoveforGodcanneverbethetypeoflovecherishedtowardswife,childrenandproperty.There is muchdifference.Howthendoeslovegiveusliberationfromsamsara(worldliness)?Manisan egoisticentity.Egoishisonlyenemy.Hefeelsheisentirelydifferentfromotherthingsinthe world.Heisconvincedthatheissharplymarkedofffromtherestoftheuniverse,byhisphysical body.Heissureheisonlythebody,eventhoughhemaytrytodenythis.Whenhesays'I'he always points to his chest and not to yonder tree.

"I amdoingnothing.Youaredoingitthroughme.Youarethedoer.Youaretheenjoyer.Iam nothing.Thywillbedone."Thisisthehighesttypeoflove,thisisdivinelove.Nowtheegocannot assertitselfforGodaloneiseverywhere.Nowthemindcannotmodifyitselfintovrittis(orsense objects) for to him there is no object except God. Who is there left to be loved or hated?

"I feelextremepangsofseparation,
I willperishunlessIbeholdthee.
Let me see thy face even for a minute.
Ah, who will take me to my beloved?
Who will show me his oath?
Who will console my heart now?
Sivananda says: O Hari! Give me the cup
of thydivineloveandquenchmythirstnow."

9 MAY - PREMA YOGA (I)

Prema isintense,concentrated,pureloveoftheLord.Premabringsthedevoteefacetofacewith the Lord.BhakticulminatesinPREMA.Premaispurenectar.Premadestroyspainsandsorrows. It makesoneimmortalandblissfulandpeaceful.Itisverydifficulttodescribethenatureofprema You willhavetoexperienceityourself.Cultivateitthroughjapa(repetitionofGod'sname),kirtan (chanting),satsanga(holycompany),serviceofdevoteesandstudyofthescriptures.Repetition of hymnsandsoonwillinstilinyourheartpeace,joy,bliss.SingthepraisesoftheLorddailyto obtain theLord'sgraceanddwellinhimalways.

EducateyoureyestoseeGodinallfaces,tobeholdthedivineforminallbeings.Educateyour earstohearthesweetmelodiouskirtans(hymns)ofLordHari.Educateyourtonguetosinghis praisesandtoutterpleasant,lovingandtruthfulwords.Educateyourhandstodocharityand servethepoor.Educatethemindtobecheerfulalways,tothinkofhimalwaysandtobecalm. This is the true path to develop PREMA.

Thesearchforthehighesttruth,alittlemeditationontheishtam(one'sowndeity)intheearly morninghours,awell-regulatedlife,aremembranceoftheimmortalnatureofGod,andan attempttofeelhispresenceinallforms,inyourprivateandyourpubliclife,willgiveabalance and a rhythmtoyourlifeandinnerspiritualstrengthandcourage.

Have ceaselessdevotiontotruth.Bereadytosacrificeallforit.Youwilldevelopastrongwill.You will becomefearless.Youwilldrawimmensestrengthandcouragefromwithin,fromhimwhois the indwellerofallbeings.YouwillattainGod-realisation.

There is onlyonetruth-God.Andthereisnothingelse.TheworldisHismanifestation.All activities, happenings,doings,areHis.AllisHe.Thisworldisephemeralandapassingshow,a phenomenononlyforatime.Thereisnoindividualexistence.Theindividualityissimply imaginary, anignorantconditionofthemind.

Love looks notwiththeeyesbutwiththeheart.Itisthecrowninggraceofhumanity.Loveis indeed heavenuponearth.Itcastsoutfear.Loveyourneighbourasyourownself.LoveGodwith all your heart,mindandsoul.Pureloveisadivineflame,everbrilliant,neverexhausted.Itisthe very essenceofpurelovetobewillingtosufferforthegoodofothers,toplaceitshappinessin the happinessofothers.

10 MAY - PREMA YOGA (II)

To defineGodistodenyGod.Youcangivedefinitionofafiniteobjectonly.Howcanyoudefine the limitlessorinfinitebeingwhoisthesourceandultimatecauseforeverything?Ifyoudefine God youarelimitingthelimitlessone,youareconfininghimwithintheconceptofthemind.God is beyondthegrossmind,buthecanberealisedthroughmeditationwithapure,subtleandone-pointed mind.

Purityoffoodleadstopurityofmind.Thisimpliesthatalltheobjectswhicharegraspedbythe sensesmustbepure.Theearsshouldhearthesublimeutterancesof Gita,Ramayanaandthe Bhagavatam,andthekirtans(hymns)ofLordHari.Letyourclothingbesatvic(orpure).Letyour speechbepure.Letyourcompanionsbesatvicpersons.Letthebooksyoustudybepure.Letthe place youliveinbesatvicLetthemeditationroombedecoratedwithsatvicpicturesoftheLord. Then onlyyouwillsoonattainGod-consciousness.YouwillfindinthePeaceChantthesewords: "O Gods!Maywewithourearshearwhatisauspicious.Oye,fittobeworshipped,maywewith our eyesseewhatisauspicious."Withoutloveaman'slifeisempty.

Withoutlovemanlivesinvain.Loveisvital.Loveisagreatpower.Giveloveanditshallbegiven unto you.Cultivatethislovethroughservice,japa(repetitionofGod'sname,satsanga(holy company)andmeditation.Striveceaselesslytoliveing od,thenonlywillyoubeabletoconquer time ordeath.

God isalwayswithyou.Hewillprotectanddeliveryou.Takerefugeinhim.Hisblessingswill overflowinyourlifeandwilltransformyourmindandbody.Developyourconsciousnessof spiritualthings.Makeaspecialeffortdailytoexercisecontroloveryourthoughts,wordsand actions. Feel his presence in your room. Pray daily. Meditate daily.

Friend!Foralittlewhileconcentratethymindontheindwellerofyourheart.Abandonallworldly pleasure.Taketothepathwhichistroddenbytherighteous,Liveonmilkandfruitsforaweek. Endurecoldandheat,hungerandthirst.Donotinjureanycreaturetotheslightestdegree.Live a contented life. Regard applause and censure equally. Derive happiness from thy soul.

11MAY - GOD IS LOVE

Godislove.LoveisGod.Godisnectar.God is prem. Bhakti is supreme love towards God. Bhakti is thegreatestpoweronearth.Itgushesfrom one's pure heart. It redeems and saves. It purifies theheart.Devotionistheseed.Faithisthe root. Service of the saints is the shower. Communion with the Lord is the fruit.

Bhaktiisoftwokinds-aparabhakti(alower type of devotion) and para bhakti (supreme love). Ringingbellsandwavinglightsisaparabhakti. A devotee who practises this has no expanded heart,isasectariananddislikesotherkinds of bhaktas who worship other deities. In par! bhakti, thereisnoritualisticworship,thedevotee is absorbed in God. In supreme love the devotee forgetshimselfentirely;heonlythinksthoughts of God. Para bhakti and jnana are one. In the end the twobecomeone.

Bhaktigrowsgraduallyjustasyougrowa flower or a tree in a garden. Cultivate bhakti in the gardenofyourheartgradually.Faithisnecessary for attaining God realisation. Faith can work wonders.Faithcanmovemountains.Faith can take you to the inner chambers of the Lord where reason dare not enter.

Japa (repetitionofGod'sname),kirtan(chanting), prayer, service of saints, study of books on bhakti all areaidstodevotion.Sotooissatvic (pure) food such as fruit and milk etc.

Evil companyistheenemyofdevotion.Give up evil company and take recourse to satsanga (or the companyofsaints).PraytotheLordthus: "O adorable Lord of compassion and love! Give me faith and devotion.Letmymindbeever fixed on thy lotus feet. Let me have constant remembranceofthee.Letmesingthyglory always."

A bhakta alwaysdoeseverythingtoplease the Lord. He will abandon everything that displeases the Lord. Thushecorrectshimselfandremoves all defects. He does not practise deliberate self-discipline likeayogi.

12 MAY - INTENSE DEVOTION

Bhakti is the slender silken thread of pure love that binds the heart of the devotee to the lotus-feet of the Lord. Bhakti is the intense devotion and supreme attachment we feel for God. It is a spontaneous outpouring of love towards God. It is pure and unselfish.

Bhakti is sacred love. It is a higher emotion, with sublime sentiment, that unites the devotee with the Lord. It has to be experienced. Human love is hollow; it is mere animal attraction; it is passion; it is carnal love; it is selfish love. It is ever-changing. It is all show and hypocrisy.

When the husband is unemployed, the wife no longer cares for him; she frowns at him. The husband dislikes his wife when she loses her beauty on account of some chronic disease. You can find real, lasting love in God alone. His love knows no change.

Bhakti is the basis of all religious life. Bhakti destroys vasanas (psychological tendencies) and egoism. A life without bhakti, faith, love and devotion is a dreary waste. Bhakti softens the heart and removes jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. Bhakti infuses joy, divine ecstasy, bliss, peace and knowledge.

All cares, worries, anxieties, fears, mental torment and tribulations vanish entirely. Then the devotee is freed from the wheel of birth and death. He attains the immortal abode of everlasting peace, bliss and knowledge.

In sakamya (desire motivated) bhakti the bhakta worships God for the sake of getting riches, for getting a son, or for the removal of suffering from a disease. In vyabhicarini (insincere) bhakti the devotee worships God for some time - then he worships his wife, children and property for some time.

To love God and God aloneisavyabhicarini (sincere bhakti. Lord Krishna say: "I am not in my control. I am in the completecontrol of my bhaktas (devotees). They have taken entire possession of my heart. How can I leavethem when they have taken entire possession of my heart? How can I leave them when they haverenounced everything for my sake? He who seeks me in all things, and all thin in me, to him I amnever lost, nor he to me."

13 MAY - NATURE OF BHAKTI

Bhakti is resting in God. Bhakti is the flow of devotion like the flow of a river. Bhakti is continuity of devotion, just as there is continuity in the flow of oil from one vessel to another vessel. Bhakti is the attraction of the needle to the magnet.

Bhakti is love for the sake of love. The devotee wants God and God alone. There is neither selfish expectation nor fear. Is the son afraid of his father though he is a judge? Is the wife afraid of her husband? So also, a devotee entertains not the least fear of God. The fear of retribution vanishes in him. He feels, believes, conceives and imagines that his chosen deity is an ocean of love (prema).

Bhakti transmutes man into divinity. It intoxicates the devotee with divine love and gives him eternal satisfaction. It makes him perfect, weans his mind from sensual objects and makes him rejoice in God.

Emotional excitement is not devotion to God. Devotion is pure love, Fanaticism is not devotion, but frenzy, mere excitement. Bhakti is not mere emotionalism, but is the tuning of the will as well as the intellect towards the divine. It is supreme love of God, and later blossoms into knowledge of the self. It leads to immortality. Bhakti is the direct approach to the ideal through the heart. Love is natural to everybody.

Bhakti can be practised under all conditions and by all alike. Study of the Vedas (the revealed scriptures of the Hindus, containing the Upanishads), learning, austere penance and brilliant intellect are not needed for the attainment of bhakti or devotion. What is wanted is constant and loving remembrance of God, coupled with faith. That is the reason why the path of devotion is available for everyone.

Bhakti is easier than any other way of approach to God. In jnana (self-knowledge) and yoga, there is the risk of a fall. In the path of devotion, there is no risk as the devotee receives full support and help from God.

14 MAY - BHAKTI AND JNANA

Those who tread the path of jnana and yoga are liable to become proud of their powers and wisdom. Bhaktas are humble, humility being the foundation of bhakti yoga.

Jnana yoga is the yoga of wisdom. It is the path of analysis and rejection. It is the path of endless negation, a very difficult path.

Raja yoga also is difficult. It is like stilling the waves of the ocean. You will have to still all the thought-waves. Karma yoga is also difficult. It is like climbing to the highest peak and tremendous will-power is needed. Bhakti yoga alone is easy. The Lord is stretching his hands to lift you up from the mire of births and deaths, but you will have to grasp his hands firmly. One thing is absolutely essential here; you should not have any other thought than that of God and God alone.

A devotee contracts, while a vedantin expands. The former contracts and enters the Lord through self-surrender, while the latter expands and becomes one with Brahman through assertion and identification.

The fruit of bhakti is jnana.Jnana intensifies bhakti. Even sages like Sankara, Madhusudana and Shukadev took to bhaktiafterrealisation to enjoy the sweetness of loving relationship with God. Knowledge or wisdomwilldawn by itself when you practise bhakti yoga. Bhakti is the pleasant, smooth, direct road toGod.Bhakti is sweet in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. It gives the highest, everlastingbliss.

Love the divine in thyheart,for this is the immediate way to the kingdom of God. Pray to the Lord, sing his glory, recitehisname and become a channel for his grace. Seek his will, do his will, surrender unto the Lord.Hewill become your charioteer on the field of life. He will drive your chariot well and you willreachthe destination, the abode of immortal bliss.

15 MAY - GET NEARER TO GOD

Maya istheLord'sillusorypower.Godcreatesthroughmayaltismayathatmakestheone universalspiritappearasmany,asembodiedinmultipleforms,anddelightsinthesameobjects, the falseideasof'I'and'mine'.Total,unreservedself-surrendertotheLordalonewillenableyou to crossthismayaandattainHislotus-feet.

Bhaktiyogasadhanaistounfoldyourselfcontinuallyandtoendeavour,continually,togetnearer to God.Themoreyouunfoldyourself,themoreguidanceyouwillreceiveandthemorepower you willmanifest.Oman!Conquerthycraving.Conquerthyattachment.Youwillsoonattain God-realisation.Inmeditationthemindisturnedbackuponitself,themindstopsallthethought waves.

Truthislove.LovetheLord.Speaktruth.Cultivatepureunselfishlove.Restintruth.Restinthe Lordoflove.Makeyourheartemptyofallotherthings.ThenalonewillGodenthroneHimselfin yourheart.EqualvisionisthetestofGod-realisationandthewaytoGodisthroughtheheart. Godcanberealisedthroughfaith,devotion,surrenderandmeditation.TrustintheLord. SurrenderyourselftoHim.Hewillblessyouwithpeaceandplenty.Hewillbestowupontheeall health, prosperity and success.

WorshiptheLordwithtruedevotion.Leadalifeofpurity,humilityandselflessness.Remember God. TakeHisnamealways.MeditateuponHim.KnowtheLordtobetheonerealityinthemidst of unrealthings.ThinkoftenofGod,bydayandbynight.Heisalwaysnearyouandwithyou-He dwells inthechambersofyourheart.

DedicateallthefruitsofactionsandtheactionitselftotheLord.Thisistheentrancetodevotion and freedomfrombondage.WorshiptheLordcontinually.LivewithHim.PutyourtrustinHim. Think of Him continuously and you will dwell with Him.

PraytoGodsincerelyforstrengthandpatiencetobearpain,butnotfordeliverancefrompain. PainisablessingfromGod.Heemploysitforyourspiritualupliftmentandemancipation.Be satisfiedwithanyconditiongodplacesyouin.Godisnearerandmoreeffectivelypresentin sickness than in health. He is your unequalled, supreme physician and surgeon.

16 MAY - THE FLOWER OF FLOWERS

Divine love(orprema)istheflowerofflowers.Itistherarestofallflowersanditiscultivatedin the heartsofalldevotees.Premaorbhaktiisintenselove,orthehighestformofdevotiontoGod. it is supremeattachmenttothelotus-feetoftheLord.Itspringsfromthebottomofthedevotee's heart. Initthereisnoeffort,thereisonlygenuine,natural,spontaneouslongingtomeetGod.

Just as afishcannotlivewithoutwater,justasthesunflowercannotlivewithoutthesun,justas the chastewifecannotlivewithoutherhusband,soalsoatruedevoteecannotlivewithoutGod - even foramoment.Bhaktiorpremaisofthenatureofnectar.Itgivesfreedomtothedevotee and makeshimperfectlyandfullysatisfied.IttakeshimtothefeetoftheLord.

There arethreethingswhichareindeedrareandareduetothegraceoftheLord.Theyarehuman birth, thelongingforliberationandtheprotectingcareofaperfectedsage.Themanwho,having by virtuousactionsinpreviousbirths,obtainedahumanbirthandagoodintellect,isfoolish indeed nottoexertforself-realisation.Heverilycommitssuicide,forhekillshimselfbyclinging to thingsunreal.

There isnohopeofimmortalitybymeansofriches.Suchindeedistheemphaticdeclarationof the srutis(scriptures).Thescripturesdeclare:"Nakarmananaprajayadhanenatyagenaike amrtatvamasasuh"-"neitherbyrituals,norbyprogeny,norbyriches,butbyrenunciationalone can oneattainimmortality."Meregivingupofobjectswillnotconstituterealrenunciation.Dear friends,rememberthispointwell.Realtyaga(renunciation)consistsinrenouncingegoism, 'mine'-ness, selfishness, anger, pride, desires and cravings.

People despisethisKaliYuga.ThisisamistakeforinKaliYugayoucanattainGod-realisationeasily, you do not havetodohardtapas(austerities).MerelysingingthenamesoftheLordandbyhis constant remembrancewillyouattainGod-realisation.Whereverthereare satsanga(holy company), kirtan(chanting),svadhyaya(studyofscriptures),bhaktas,swamisandyogis-thereis Satya Yuga (goldenage).Inallashramsandholyplaces SatyaYugaprevails.Kalicannotenterhere.

17 MAY - IMPORTANCE OF GURU BHAKTI

Here is bhakti yoga in a nutshell. Select an ishta devata (a favourite deity) - either Siva, Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Dattatreya, Gayatri or Shakti - according to the advice of your guru, or your own inclination. Get the proper mantra (a mystic formula). Then keep a picture of that particular deity in front of you in the meditation room. For six months gaze steadily at the picture from fifteen seconds to fifteen minutes. Concentrate on the figure, without winking, until the tears flow profusely.

Study the scriptures constantly - the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, the Narada Bhakti Sutras and the Sandilya Sutras. Live for one year in a holy place. Pass through the course of nava vidha bhakti (nine devotional practices). Repeat your mantra constantly. Sleep only for three hours. Select an attitude suitable for you madhurya sakhya, daasya or vatsalya (lover-beloved, friend, servant or mother-child). Make ungrudging, unreserved, true, perfect self-surrender to God. Pray from the bottom of your heart. Prayer can move mountains. Prayer can reach a realm wherein reason can hardly enter.

Have devotion to one ideal. Bhakti must be unswerving, one-pointed, single-minded devotion. Slowly develop anuraga prema, priti, viraha (pain of separation from God), bhava, and maha bhava (stages or states of God-love). In maha bhava the devotee is unconscious of his body and the world. He is absolutely merged in God. From lower bhakti the devotee passes on to higher (para) bhakti. A devotee gets progressive emancipation after passing through salokya sampiya sarupya and sayujya mukti stages in emancipation or liberation.

After enjoying lower mukti a devotee finally attains kaivalya moksha - the same state as that of a jnani An earnest seeker with perseverance can realise God within two or three years. I assure you emphatically. So make a sincere effort and watch the results. Follow Lord Krishna's instructions, given in the Bhagavad Gita and described as: MACCHITTA, YUKTA, MATPARA - With the mind totally absorbed in God, united with God, with God as the goal and ideal.

18 MAY - AIDS TO BHAKTI

People put the question: "How can we love God whom we have not seen?" Live in the company of saints and hear of the divine sport of God, study the sacred scriptures. Worship Him first in His several forms as manifested in the world. Worship any image or picture of the Lord or the guru. Recite His name, sing His glories. Stay for a year in Brindavan or Ayodhya, Chitrakute, Pandharpur, Benares, or Ananda Kutir. You will develop love for the Lord.

Every act must be done that awakens the emotion of bhakti. Keep the room of worship clean, decorate it, burn incense, light a lamp, keep a clean seat, bathe and wear clean clothes. Apply ash and kumkum (sacred red powder worn on the forehead by devotees). Wear a rosary, either that made of beads symbolising the third eye of Siva or that which is made from the stalks of the holy basil. All these produce a benign and elevating influence on the mind inspiring it and generating piety. They help to create the necessary attitude or feeling to invoke the deity that you want to worship. The mind will be able to concentrate easily.

Practice of right conduct, keeping company with the holy, repetition of God's name, remembrance, singing of the names of the Lord, prayer, worship, service of saints, residence in places of pilgrimage, service of the poor and the sick with divine feeling, observance of duties, offering of all actions and their fruits to the Lord, feeling the presence of the Lord in all beings, prostrations before the image and saints, renunciation of earthly enjoyments and wealth, charity, austerities, and vows, practice of ahimsa (non-violence), truth and celibacy all these will help you to develop devotion.

Desire obstructs the growth of devotion. Devotion to the Lord increases in intensity when mundane desires are renounced. Renunciation is the very essence of devotional love. Divine love has no element of desire in it.

Devotion cannot co-exist with desire of any kind, not even the desire for liberation. The devotee wants God and God alone, and His loving service. The devotee loves God and serves Him and His creation. He does not strive consciously for liberation which God confers on his devotee unsolicited.

19 MAY - THE SAVING GRACE

Japa is the best of all spiritual practices in this modern age. It is the easiest too. The divine name alone will give you all success and bestow on you the highest spiritual attainments.

The seeker after truth reaches the highest goal by japa or recitation of the Lord's name (or mantra) alone. This is a sure medicine for the disease of birth and death. If you take to the recitation of the divine name, all inauspiciousness will certainly vanish.

Smarana is remembrance of the Lord at all times. The mind does not think of any object of the world. It is engrossed in thinking of the glorious Lord alone. The mind meditates on the glories of the Lord and forgets the body. Even japa is only remembrance of the Lord.

Ever remember the Lord. His divine name is the greatest treasure on earth. It has got indescribable power of bestowing blessings upon all who have faith. It is a good idea to recite the mantras at bedtime.

In ordinary self-consciousnessthere is duality between the repetitioner and the name. It is discursive. It is within the fieldsofordinary experience. It is confined within the categories of the mind, of limited conceptions.Ultimately the ordinary self-consciousness is elevated into a transcendental experience, intoastate of superconsciousness.

The repetitioner and the namebecome one. The eternally revealed truth reveals itself to him and he realises his oneness withthesupreme. The sense of duality, the gulf of separateness between the finite and the infinite isremoved.

Spiritual life needs harmonyinallparts of your being. Spiritual truth can only be realised when the whole being is perfectlyatease and in tune with the divine. Mantra (the name of God) has the power to release cosmicandsupracosmic consciousness. It bestows illumination, freedom, supreme peace, eternal blissandimmortality.

20 MAY - HUMAN NATURE INTO DIVINE NATURE

God is a mystery, Mind is a mystery. The world is a mystery. How sankirtan transmutes human nature into divine nature, how it overhauls the old vicious habits, how it changes the mental substance, how it transforms or metamorphoses the impure nature into pure nature, and how it brings the devotee face to face with God - this also is a mystery.

Science and reason can hardly explain the 'modus operandi' of sankirtan (chanting), Reason is an imperfect instrument. A man of weak intellect can be defeated by one who has a stronger intellect. Reason cannot explain many of life's problems. Intuition transcends reason; it does not contradict reason.

There is great shakti(power)inevery word. The very utterance of the word 'hot pakouri' (a tasty savoury) bringssalivatothemouth. If you speak about 'faeces' when a man is taking his meal, he will immediatelyvomit,Whensuch is the case with ordinary words, what to speak of the names of God? EverynameofGodisfilled with various divine potencies and nectar.

One objectorsays."IfIsay,'sugar-candy, sugar-candy' can I get it? Row can I see God if I simply say 'Rama, Rama'?"Inthecaseof sugar-candy, sugar-candy is outside, but God resides in the very chamber of yourheart.Heisclose to you. By repeating "Rama, Rama", the mind becomes one-pointed. It meltsinsilenceand,in the heart, you will get the darsan (vision) of God. The name of God is as good asGodhimself.God is chaitanya (consciousness, energy) and so is his name. It is not so with otherobjectsornames of objects.

There is a man insoundsleep.The prana (life) is there; it is awake, He will not respond if you call, "Prana prana". Butjustcallhimby his name and he will hear you and will get up from his sleep. Such is the powerofthename.The name is nothing but chaitanya (consciousness) personified.

21 MAY - THE POWER OF SOUND

The subtler the element, the more powerful it is. Water is more powerful than earth because it is more subtle. Water removes earth away. Fire is more powerful than water because it is subtler than water. Fire dries up water. Air is more powerful than fire because it is more subtle than fire. Air blows away fire. Akasha (ether) is more powerful than air because it is more subtle than air. Air rests in akasha. Akasha is the support for the air. Air is born of akasha fire is born of air, water is born of fire, earth is born of water. During the cosmic dissolution the earth is reduced to or involved into water, water into fire, fire into air, and air into akasha.

The barrier that separates man from the supreme soul, is mind. The five subtle elements, earth, water, fire, air, ether, which go to constitute the body of the antahkarana (psyche), are the five robbers who have plundered the jewel of atman Akasha is the ring-leader. If you control akasha if you subdue the ring-leader, the other four elements or robbers will come under your control. If you can control the five elements you can control the mind very easily. The function of akasha is sound. Therefore kirtan helps the aspirant to control the mind easily and thereby attain God-consciousness.

Sound exists in four fundamental states: dense, audible sound - sound at its maximum differentiation; inner, subtle, more ethereal sound - inaudible to the human ear; a higher inner and more ethereal state; the potential state of sound - undifferentiated, the primal substratum of all sounds, the source of the universe.

The mind is purified by constant kirtan (chanting). It is filled with good and pure thoughts. Daily kirtan strengthens good samskaras (habits). The mind of a man who trains himself in thinking good, holy thoughts, develops a tendency to think good thoughts. His character is moulded and transformed by continuous good thoughts.

He who entertains thoughts of divinity becomes transformed actually into divinity himself. His bhava (disposition) is purified and divinised. The meditator and the meditated, the worshipper and the worshipped, the thinker and the thought, become one and the same. This is samadhi This is the fruit of kirtan or upasana (adoration).

My dear friends, do sankirtan daily. Disseminate sankirtan bhakti far and wide. Develop vishvaprem (cosmic love) through sankirtan. Realise your sat-chit-ananda state!

22 MAY - THE LORD'S NAME

The nameisaverbalexpressionoftheconceptionoftheSupreme Being, who is known by differentnamesandforms,indifferentclimesandtimes.Thesupreme is infinite but as it is not alwayspossibleforthecommonmantoconceiveofwhatisbeyond the perception of the finite mind,thisinfinitetruthissymbolisedasforms,symbolsorobjects, that vary according to each one's respective tendencies or modes of perception.

Thoughintheinitialstagethereisdifferenceanddistinctionamong the various names and their associatedobjects,ultimately,whenthehabitofrepetitionofthe name is formed and the divine consciousnessiskepteverawake,thenthereremainsnodistinction between the name and the associatedideaorobject.Theintuitiveknowledgeofthesupreme reveals itself in the name itself - for thebasisofallnamesandformsistheoneprimalbeing who manifests himself under differentnamesandforms,asdifferentfaithsandtendencies, as different sects and races, in different times and places.

Thereisanunfathomabledepth,intensesweetnessandcharm in the Lord's name. It is beyond the futileexplanationofthelimitedintellect.Itisathingknowable only through experience. The musicfirstthrillsthenerves,harmonisesthemandthenmysteriously acts upon the mind. The sincere devotee loses himself in divine ecstasy.

The worldlymindcannotgrasporperceivethisstateofintense emotion. The Lord's name is all bliss andwhenitischanted,themindmergesinitsbliss.Itloses its individual entity in bliss. It becomes one with the bliss itself.

Withoutthenameofthebelovednonemayhopetocrossthesea of samsara (worldly existence). The Lord'snameisthelastingmedicineagainstanykindofailment. You cannot be overtaken by sorrows,sins,troubles,sicknessesifyoutakerefugeintheLord's name. Repetition of the Lord's namedispelsallfearsandevilthoughts.Hewhorepeatsthename of the Lord has all his desires fulfilled.Sosingtheholyname.IfyouareattachedtotheLord you will be released from all attachmentswhichbindyouandpullyoudown.Thisconstantrepetition gives infinite strength.

23 MAY - GOD AND HIS NAME ARE ONE

What a lot of joy the repetition of His name brings! What a lot of power it infuses into man! How it changes the human nature marvellously! How it exalts a man to the status of divinity! How it destroys old sins, vasanas (tendencies), sankalpas (thoughts), whims, fancies, depressing moods, sex-impulses, and various samskaras (psychological impressions)!

How sweet is God's name! What a tremendous power it possesses! How it transforms quickly the asuric (diabolical) nature into satvic (divine) nature! How it brings you face to face with the Lord and makes you realise your oneness with him (para bhakti - supreme love)!

The name of God, chanted correctly or incorrectly, knowingly or unknowingly, carefully or carelessly, is sure to give the desired result. Every name is filled with countless potencies (shaktis). Its glory is indescribable. The efficacy and inherent shakti of the name of God is unfathomable.

Just as fire has the natural property of burning inflammable things, so also the name of God has the power of burning sins, samskaras and vasanas and bestowing eternal bliss and everlasting peace on those who repeat it. Just as burning quality is natural to and inherent in fire, so also the power of destroying sins with their very root and branch and bringing the aspirant into blissful union with the Lord through bhava-samadhi (culmination of devotion) is natural to and inherent in the name of God.

O man! Take refuge in the name. Nami (God) and Nama (name) are inseparable. Sing the Lord's name incessantly. Remember the name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. In this present age japa (repetition of God's name) is the easiest, quickest, safest and surest way to reach God and attain immortality and perennial joy. Glory to the Lord! Glory to his name!

24 MAY - MANTRA IS POWER

There is an indescribable power in the mantra (God's name). Shakti is the energy or form of the mantra, i.e. the vibration form set up by its sound which carries a man to the devata that is worshipped. A mantra accelerates and generates the creative force. Mantra produces harmony inbody and mind and awakens supernatural powers.

Ifyou repeat the mantra with concentration and meaning you will attain God-realisation quickly. The glory of the name cannot be established through the intellect. It can be realised only through devotion and faith and constant repetition. That which shines above all, having made the whole world equal to a blade of grass, full of the light of consciousness, bliss, purity - is only the sweet name of the Lord.

Sweeter than all sweet things, more auspicious than all auspicious things, purer than all pure things is the name of the Lord. OM is everything. OM is the name of God. Name is the bridge that connects the devotee with God. God's name is the way and the goal. Name is the weapon to destroy the mind. The name has the power to burn sins and desires.

As you repeat the mantra feel that the Lord is seated in your heart, that purity is flowing from the Lord to your mind. The name serves as gate-keeper; it never allows worldly thoughts to enter the mind.

Remembrance of God also includes hearing stories pertaining to God at all times, talking of God, teaching to others what pertains to God, meditation on the attributes of God etc. God is to be remembered at all times, without a break, as long as one has consciousness intact. Right from the time he gets up from sleep in the morning, until he is completely overpowered by sleep in the night, a person is to remember God. He has no other duty in the world but to remember God.

Remembrance of God alone can destroy all worldly samskaras. Remembrance of God alone can turn the mind away from sense objects.

25 MAY - MANTRA YOGA

Mantra yoga is a great science. "Manana trayate iti mantrah" - "by manana (constant thinking or recollection) one is protected or released from the round of birth and death - that is mantra." That is called mantra, by meditating on which the jiva or soul attains freedom from sin, enjoyment in heaven and final liberation. And, by its aid it attains in full the fourfold fruit (chaturvarga) i.e., dharma, artha, kaama and moksha (virtue, wealth, pleasure and liberation). A mantra is so called because it is achieved by the mental process. The root 'man' in the word mantra means 'to think'. And 'tra' comes from 'trai' meaning to protect or to free - from the bondage of samsara or the phenomenal world. By the combination of 'man' and 'tra' comes mantra which calls forth the four aims of being chaturvarga. A mantra is divinity. It is divine power manifesting in a sound body. The mantra itself is the devata (deity). The aspirant should try his level best to realise his unity with the mantra of the divinity. To the extent he does so, the mantra-power supplements his worship-power. Just as a flame is strengthened by winds, so also the aspirant's individual shakti (power) is strengthened by mantra shakti. Then the individual shakti joins with the mantra shakti to make it more powerful.

The mantra is awakened from its sleep through the sadhana-shakti (worship power) of the aspirant. The mantra is a mass of radiant energy.

Even to visualise the Lord in meditation just once, to utter the divine name of the Lord, with love, even a single time, has surely got a tremendous, transforming influence upon the soul. You are free here and now. Only you are not aware of it, through the force of maya (or ignorance).

This atman is peace. Realise this peace that passeth all understanding and be free for ever. Peace is thy birthright. Peace is thy real, essential nature. Peace is Brahman. Peace and Brahman are one.

26 MAY - BENEFITS OF JAPA

Japa (repetition of the mantra checks the force of the thought current moving towards objects. It forces the mind to move towards God, towards the attainment of eternal bliss. Eventually it helps us to have the darshana (vision) of God. The mantra-power is hidden in every mantra. Whenever the spiritual aspirant shows lack of vigour in his sadhana (practice), the mantra shakti (power of the mantra) reinforces the sadhana shakti (energy) of the aspirant, Constant and prolonged repetition of the mantra (name of God) for some months, cuts new grooves in the mind and the brain.

During japa all the divine qualities steadily flow into your mind from the Lord, just as oil flows from one vessel to another vessel. Japa transforms the nature of the mind. It fills the mind with satva (purity).

Japa changes the mental substance from passion to purity, from rajas to satva. It calms and strengthens the mind. It makes the mind introspective - it checks the outgoing tendencies. Japa eradicates all kinds of evil thoughts and inclinations. It induces determination, and austerity and eventually it leads to the direct darshana (vision) of God (the ishta devati or tutelary deity) or to God-realisation.

The mind is purified by constant japa and worship and it is filled with good and pure thoughts. Repetition of mantra and worship strengthen the good samskaras. "As a man thinks so he becomes" - this is the psychological law. The mind of the man who trains himself to think good, holy thoughts, develops a tendency to think good thoughts. His character is moulded and transformed by the continuous flow of good thoughts.

When the mind thinks of the image of the Lord during japa and worship, the mental substance actually assumes the form of the image. The impression of the object is left on the mind and this is called samskara When the act is repeated very often, the samskara gain strength and a tendency or habit is formed in the mind.

He who entertains thoughts of divinity becomes transformed actually into divinity itself. This is the power of constant thinking and meditation. His disposition itself is divinised and purified. The meditator and the meditated, the worshipper and the worshipped, the thinker and the thought, become one and the same thing. This is samadhi. This is the fruit of worship (upasana) or of doing japa.

27 MAY - LORD IS YOUR SOLE REFUGE

The name of the Lord is your sole refuge. It is your prop, shelter and abode. Name is divine nectar. Name and form are inseparable.

Keep a picture of the Lord and concentrate on it. Concentrate on the face or feet or the whole picture. Then visualise this in your heart or in the space between the eyebrows.

Repeat your mantra - Om Namah Sivaya Om Namo Narayanaya - Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya mentally, or if the mind wanders do this verbally.

There are five kinds of bhavas or attitudes. They are shaanta bhava (relationship of peace), daasya bhava (relation-ship of servant-master), vaatsalya bhava (relationship of father-son), sakhya bhava (relationship of friendship) and madhurya bhava (relationship of lover and beloved). Have any kind of bhava that suits your temperament. Develop it again and again.

Practise the nine modes of devotion - shravana (hearing the lilas or stories of the Lord), kirtana (singing the Lord's name), smarana (remembering the Lord), padasevana (service of the Lord's feet), archana (offering of flowers), vandana (prostration) daasyam (servant bhava sakhya (His friendship), and atmanivedana (self-surrender).

Feel that you are an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Feel that the Lord works through your body, mind and senses. Offer all your actions to the Lord. Offer the fruits of your actions to the Lord. This is the way to do self-surrender.

Do anusthana (intense whole-time practice) frequently. Live on milk and fruits for a week. Observe mauna (or silence). Do japa (repetition of God's name) and meditate in an intense manner. Do mental worship, it is a great help for increasing devotion and attaining concentration. Offer flowers, incense etc., mentally, to the Lord.

God is all-pervading.

God is all-permeating.
God is interpenetrating.
God is indwelling.

28MAY-SANKIRTAN IS SPIRITUAL FOOD

Peopledosankirtanwithsurprisingenthusiasm and vigour for a year or two but after that they becomeslothfulandtorpid.Thesamezeal should be kept up throughout life. Just as food and drinkarenotdispensedwith,evenfarone day so also sankirtan should not be stopped even for a day,Sankirtanisindeedaspiritualfood. Nay, it is a, physical and mental tonic as well. You can live onsankirtan.

WhenyousingLordHari'sname,feelthat the Lord is seated in your heart, that every name of the Lordisfilledwithdivinepotencies, that the old, vicious samskara (habits) and vasanas (tendencies)areburntwiththepowerof the name, that the mind is filled with purity, that rajas (passion)andtamas(inertia)arecompletely destroyed, that the veil of ignorance is torn down. MeditateonHisformandHisattributes, then only you will attain the maximum benefits of sankirtan.

KirtanissingingtheLord'sglories.Thedevotee is thrilled with divine emotion. He loses himself in theloveforGod.Heweepsinthemiddle when thinking of the glory of God. His voice becomes chokedandhefliesintoastateofdivine bhava (feeling). The devotee is ever merged in japa of the Lord'snameanddescribinghisglories to one and all. Wherever he goes he begins to sing and praiseGod.Herequestsalltojoinhiskirtans. He sings and dances in ecstasy and he makes others dance also.

Suchpracticesshouldbetheoutcomeof a pure heart; they should not be merely a show. God knowstheinnersecretsofall.Nonecancheat him. There should be perfect straight-forwardness. All hisactionsshouldbeanaturalout-pouring from the heart.

Thisistheeasiestofallmodesofapproach to God. In the Kali Yuga, the Iron Age, kirtan alone is thebestyoga.Thisistheprescribedmethod of devotion for this Age. The mind that is ever intent uponsingingtheLord'snamesandglories has no occasion to take interest in the things of the world.Dayandnightthedevoteefeelsthe presence of God. This thins out the ego; he becomes satvic and pure at heart.

Mayyoulivedrownedintheoceanofdivine ecstasy, in a fully illumined state, by the regular practiceofsankirtanandcompleteself-surrender to the Lord.

29 MAY - SING WITHOUT CEASING

AkhandakirtanistosingtheLord'snamewithoutabreak.Thisisaveryeffectivespiritual sadhana (practice).Thereiseradicationofallevilvrittis(thoughts)duringthisperiod;themind has neither time noropportunitytothinkofsensualobjectsduringthisperiod.Thisisaneasyway to capture the mind.Duringthisperiodthemindisfilledwithsatva(purity)anditisfilledwith supreme peace andjoy. There is noyajna(sacredrite)greaterthanakhandakirtan.Itisspeciallysuitedtothis age.

It costs
you nothing.Duringakhandakirtanthemahamantrashouldbesung.Onepersonshould repeat this mantra(formula)inamelodious,sweetvoiceandalltheothersshouldfollowhim in chorus. The sixteenwords,"HareRamaHareRamaRamaRam
a HareHare,HareKrishnaHareKrishnaKrishnaKrishnaHareHare"constituteonemantra. Do not repeatorsingeither"HareRamaHareRamaRamaRamaHareHare"or"HareKrishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare" twice.

Forindividualjapa(repetition)andkirtan(chanting)thewholemantrashouldberepeated at a stretch.Butduringakhandakirtantoavoidtoomuchstrainandbreak,thefirsthalfof the mantra mayberepeatedbythepersonleadingthegroup,followedbythechorusoftheother half. Some peoplecannotsingevenhalfthemantrawithoutabreak.Theyshouldtrainthemselves to sing onehalfwithoutabreakinthemiddle.Especiallythosewholeadthekirtanshould take care of this point, otherwise it is not akhanda kirtan.

Openthedoorsofyourheart.Letthelightningsparkoflovеariseinyourheart.Let love pierce youthroughandthrough.Letheartsingtoheart.Letyoursoulmixwiththesupreme soul. Let theheart-lotusblossomandwaftitssweetdivinefragrance.Letthedivinethrillstrike the strings ofyourheart.Letthetearsflowdownyourcheeks.Letthedivineecstasyfillyourwhole being. LordHariisanoceanofmercy.Hehasboundlessloveforhisdevotees.Heisthepurifier of the sinful and the fallen.
Collectthedissipatedraysofthemind.Becomeserene.RepeatGod'sname.Yourhappiness will know no bounds, God will dwell in your heart.
MayLordNarayanatakeyoutohisbosomandbatheyouinthesacredwatersofdivine love and transcendental bliss.

30 MAY - FORGET THE BODY

He who does sankirtan (same as kirtan: chanting) forgets the body and the world. Sankirtan brings super-intuitional knowledge. Sankirtan brings darsan (vision) of God or attainment of divine consciousness in this Kali Yuga (dark age). It develops love. It is the easiest, surest, safest, quickest way for attaining God-realisation.

Those who do sankirtan in the beginning, for the sake of mental enjoyment, will realise the purificatory effects of sankirtan after some time and then they will do it with bhava (devotion) and sraddha (faith). There is a mysterious power in the name of the Lord. Man cannot live by bread alone but he can live on the name of the Lord.

The harmonious vibrations produced by the singing of the names of the Lord help the devotees to control their minds easily. They produce a benign influence and elevate the mind at once from its old ruts, to magnanimous heights of divine splendour and glory. If one does sankirtan from the bottom of one's heart, with full bhava and prem (love) even the trees, birds and animals will respond. They will be deeply influenced. Such is the power of Sankirtan It brings the devotee face to face with God.

The individual soul becomes one with paramatma (the supreme soul) only through the process of evolution (ascent through different rungs of the spiritual ladder) by means of nada upasana (contemplation of mystic sound). Nada (sound) is of two kinds - gross or expressed and subtle or unexpressed. The former leads to the latter.

The union of prana with anala or fire, in the human soul, is an indispensible requisite, if the individual soul wishes to unite with Brahman (infinite) or attain the highest (nirvikalpa) samadhi The fire of the muldhara (the lowest psychic centre) represents the RA bija (seed mantra). It ascends to meet the prana from the brahmarandhra (the crown of the head), which represents the MA bija. The combination of RA-MA is the taraka bija (the redeeming seed-mantra) by which the individual soul crosses to the other shore of fearlessness and immortality and attains eternal bliss and supreme joy. Sankirtan is an easy approach to the sukshma nada (subtle sound) and eventually to the divine communion.

31 MAY - THE SUPREME REMEDY

When allopathy, homeopathy, chromopathy, naturopathy, ayurvedapathy and all other 'pathies' fail to cure a disease, the divine namapathy alone can save you. The name of the Lord is a sovereign specific, a sheet-anchor, an infallible panacea and a cure-all for all diseases. It is an ideal or supreme 'pick-me-up' in gloom and despair, in depression and sorrow, in the daily battle of life or the struggle for existence, There is a mysterious power in the name. There is an inscrutable shakti (power) in God's name! All the divine potencies are hidden in the Lord's name. It is the cream or the quintessence of Chyavana-Prasha, Makaradhwaji almonds, Vasanta-Kusumakara or Svarna-Bhasma or gold oxide. It is a mysterious, ineffable divine injection.

You can take this medicine or nama-japa (repetition of God's name) yourself, for curing any disease. You can administer this marvellous medicine to other patients also in your house or elsewhere. Sit by the side of the patient and repeat, with sincere devotion and faith, the name of the Lord, like Hari Om, Sri Ram, Om Namahsivaya, and sing his names also: "Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare; Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare." Pray for his mercy and grace. All maladies and agonies will come to an end. Do the treatment of nama-japa for at least two hours in the morning and evening. You will find the miraculous effect within a short time. Both the doctor and the patient should have perfect faith in the Lord's name, his mercy and grace. The real doctor is only Lord Narayana. Lord Dhanvantari, the physician of the three worlds (who expounded the ayurvedic medical science), has himself declared: "By the medicine of the repetition of the names, Achyuta, Ananta, Govinda, all diseases are cured - this is my definite and honest declaration." In all treatments Lord Narayana is the real doctor. You find that even the world's best doctors fail to cure a dying king. You might have also heard of many instances where patients ailing from the worst type of diseases are cured miraculously, where even the ablest doctors have declared the case hopeless. This itself is clear proof that there is the divine hand behind all cures.

The divine name will eradicate the disease of birth and death and bestow on you moksha, liberation or immortality.

1 JUNE - UNFLINCHING DEVOTION

When you repeat the Lord's name you must evince unflinching devotion from the bottom of your heart devotion to God, without love for any other object. You must drive off all worldly thoughts from your mind. Fill the mind with thoughts of God and God alone. You must struggle. You must exert hard. Remain absorbed in him.

Ifyou love Krishna then love Him alone till the end. Just as you see wood alone in the chair, table, bench, stick, cupboard etc., see the antaratma (the hidden indwelling self) Krishna alone in flowers, trees, fruits, tumblers and all objects. This is ananya bhakti (total devotion). This is para (supreme) bhakti.

Just as you remember all the qualities of your son when you think of his name, so too you should remember the qualities of God - omnipotence, omniscience etc., when you think of his own name.

When you repeat the mantra, have satvic bhava or shuddha bhava (the pure mental attitude). Bhava comes slowly when the purification process goes on. Even mere mechanical repetition has an effect, a very great effect. The vibration in the mind set up by the repetition purifies the chitta (mind-stuff) and brings chitta shuddi (purity of mind).

Abeginner should have a japa-mala or rosary. Later on he can take recourse to manasika japa (mental repetition). If a man repeats his mantra for six hours daily, his heart will be purified quickly. He can feel the purity. Have great faith in your guru-mantra (the mantra learnt from your guru) and keep it a secret.

Constant repetition of the mantra with faith, devotion, purity and one-pointed mind awakens the mantra chaitanya (the dynamic consciousness of the mantra), latent in the mantra, and bestows mantra siddhi (perfection or psychic power inherent in the mantra) on the aspirant- illumination, freedom, peace, eternal bliss and immortality. The repetition of the mantra again and again generates a great spiritual force and momentum and intensifies the spiritual samskaras or impressions.

2 JUNE - SINGINGGOD'S NAME

Bhakti (devotion) in essence is two-fold. On theonehand there is an intense attachment towards God, nurtured by deep emotion and, on the other,an earnest urge of love for him. When these two elements are combined we find bhakti tobeeither an attachment emerging out of love or love manifesting' itself as attachment.

The essential feature in bhakti is that this feeling is in relation to the highest - the supreme lovable one who is real and imperishable - and not in relation to the objects of the world that are transitory and therefore unreal. Such love or devotion assumes various forms of expression and goes by different names. Narration in poetry or prose, singing the glory of the Lord, and more popularly, singing the name of the Lord are some of them.

Aharmonious, rhythmical note produces a distinctive image. This is not imagination - for every sound there is a particular image. It has been scientifically proved that certain sounds produce certain particular figures over some distinct surface. So it is reasonable to believe that the respective names of God, associated with their respective forms, can also produce their images on the mental surface. Through continuous repetition, the name forms a deep-rooted impression in the mind of the repetitioner, who ultimately attains God-vision.

God and his name are identical and inseparable. He dwells where his name is sung. The whole atmosphere is sanctified by his name - peace, purity and bliss prevail there. His name carries the message of love. His name frees the soul from affliction, unrest and bondage. His name knows no barriers, no distinctions. His name purifies the vicious lower self and elevates it to sublimity, to universal consciousness and transcendent God-head.

Bhajana is meditation on God. Life without bhajana of some sort is useless my dear friends. Life without worship is dull, dreary. It is a mere burden on this earth. All religionists do their own bhajana in their own way. The goal is the same; the paths are different. The object of doing worship is to attain infinite, eternal peace, immortality and freedom from the wheel of birth and death.

3 JUNE - THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer elevates the mind. It fills the mind with purity. It is associated with praise of God. It keeps the mind in tune with God. Prayer can reach a realm where reason dare not enter. Prayer can work miracles. Prayer frees the devotee from the fear of death. It makes him feel nearer to God; it makes him feel the divine presence everywhere. Prayer awakens the divine consciousness in him and makes him feel his essential immortal and blissful nature.

Prayer has a tremendous influence. If the prayer is sincere and if it proceeds from the bottom of your heart (antarika) it will at once melt the heart of the Lord. Sri Krishna had to run bare-foot from Dwaraka on hearing the heart-felt prayer of Draupadi. You all know this. Lord Hari, the mighty ruler of this universe apologised before Prahlada for coming a little late, when the latter prayed. How merciful and loving is the Lord.

Say even once, from the bottom of your heart: "O Lord, I am thine. Thy will be done. Have mercy on me. I am thy servant and devotee. Forgive. Guide. Protect. Enlighten." Have a meek, receptive attitude of mind. Have bhava in your heart. Your prayer is at once heard and responded to. Do this in the daily battle of life and realise for yourself the high efficacy of prayer.

Prayer is the first important limb of yoga. Preliminary spiritual sadhana or practice is prayer. God helps even a dacoit (robber) when he prays. Pray to God for purity, devotion, light and knowledge. You will get all these things.

Get up early in the morning and repeat some prayers for getting mental and physical brahmacharya (purity). Pray in any manner you like. Become as simple as a child. Freely open the chambers of your heart. Sincere devotees know well the high efficacy of prayers.

Pray fervently, right now, from this very second. Do not delay friend; that 'tomorrow' may never come. "O Lord, I do not know what I should ask thee. Thou only knowest what I want. I surrender myself unto thee. I open my heart unto thee. Thou art merciful and omniscient. Thou knowest the interior of my heart. Let me accomplish thy will. Make me a fit instrument for thy unhampered play (lila). Prostrations unto thee."

4 JUNE - PRAYER IS SPIRITUAL FOOD

Prayer elevates, inspires, redeems. Through prayer divine grace and divine light descend. Prayer is spiritual food for the soul. Prayer is a spiritual tonic. Prayer is a master-key to open the realms of elysian bliss. Prayer helps the devotee to be in tune with the infinite. Prayer should come from the inner recesses of the heart - then it will be heard at once.

Prayer works wonders. Its power is ineffable. Through prayer the devotee sits by the side of the Lord. Prayer expands and purifies the heart. Prayer is a strong spiritual injection. It fills the heart with immense power and strength. Every religion has its own prayer. Pray in the early morning - it is more effective. Let prayer become habitual pray at all times. Pray not for wealth, position, wife and children, success in lotteries or horse racing - ask for darsan (vision) of the Lord. Pray for devotion and communion.

Recite the beautiful Upanishadic prayer morning and night: "Asatoma sat gamaya, tamasoma jyotir gamaya, mrityorma amritam gamaya" - "lead me on from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from mortality to immortality." During mass prayer a huge spiritual current is generated.

Gayatri japa is a prayer - the devotee asks for illumination of the intellect, so that he can know his real, essential, divine nature. This is an unselfish prayer Mrityunjaya mantra also is a prayer. It is a prayer to the Lord Siva. The devotee asks: "Free me from bondage and death make me immortal."

Om bhur bhuvah svah tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat (Gayatri Mantra)

"Let us meditate on the glory of Ishvara, who has created this universe, who is fit to be worshipped, who is the remover of all sins and ignorance. May He enlighten our intellect."

Om tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pustivardhanam urvarukamiva bandhanan mrtyor mukshiya mamrtat (Mrityunjaya Mantra)

"We worship the three-eyed one (Lord Siva), who is fragrant and who nourishes well all beings. May He liberate us from death for the sake of immortality, even as the cucumber is severed from its bondage (to the creeper)."

5 JUNE - SELFLESS PRAYER

According to Ghazali, the Muslim, prayer has three stages: verbal, mental and when merging with the Lord's will. At the first stage the devotee sings the glory of God, chants his praises and pours out the anguish of his heart in melodious hymns. Secondly, when the mind becomes calm, when the out-going senses have been restrained by sustained practices, when the mind cannot be easily affected by evil influences, prayer becomes mental. There, no physical effort is needed. At the third stage, when the mind gets concentrated in the divine, when it loses its outward attraction and becomes serene, devoid of desires or cravings, then prayer becomes automatic, natural and habitual.

This is the highest stage - the Lord's will has become his own will. For God, who is invoked by his prayer, merges in his mind and in his will. There is no self consciousness for him - he abides in the Lord - his mind entirely saturated with God. He perceives nothing external nor anything internal. He even forgets that he is praying to the Lord, or that he is absorbed in the Lord's will. There is a vague sense of duality but he has only one experience and that is his oneness with the Lord.

Prayer is full of emotions: deep, serene emotions filled with sincerity. But when there is too much emotion and not so much natural sincerity, then prayer becomes rather jejunical and therefore ineffective. Then we do not receive a direct response from God. Prayer has its consequences. The nature of its response mainly depending on the inner nature of the person who prays - his temperament, his object in view, his requirements, his faith and his sincerity. These are the sine qua non of prayer.

DO YOU WANT GOD?

Do you really want God? Do you really thirst for his vision (darshana)? Have you got real spiritual hunger? You may deliver thrilling lectures on bhakti (devotion), you may write volumes on bhakti - and yet you may not possess a grain of true devotion. He who thirsts for the darshana of God will develop bhakti. If there is a sincere demand for God, then the supply must come. By regular sadhana (practice) may you attain peace, bliss, knowledge, perfection and God-realisation.

6 JUNE - PRAYER As children we pray to our parents, elders and guardians at the time of our need.

We seek their
help and guidance. When we grow into adolescence we learn to pray to ourselves - to our latent abilities and strength. We try not to be dependent on others. But there is a limitation to this prayer. So when we feel we are in need of something else, something beyond our capacity, we resign ourselves to God and pray for His help and guidance. Evidently we feel His response - an all-potent inner force that listens to our prayers and fulfils our wishes the moment we are a little sincere and faithful.

As for the devotee, he resigns himself to God; surrendering his ego at His feet. He forgets all about the world and thinks of nothing else but God alone who would surely save him and who alone would be able to help and guide him. He communes his will with God's and acts as per His guidance. There is no sense of individuality or doer-ship in him. He knows that God's will is his will and that he must act up to it. Does that mean that he is devoid of self-effort? Certainly not. For he negates himself and resigns himself to the Lord. To him flows the divine grace instantly. His nature is divinised and so he naturally exerts himself in the right direction. Indeed the very act of self-surrender is purushartha (self-effort) of the highest order.

For the vedantin however, his prayer is essentially the prayer to the self within - to himself- to the cosmic consciousness that is immanent in all. In the initial stage he considers his prayer as a sort of desire - either earthly or spiritual - either with motive or without motive. Then when he advances sufficiently in his sadhana (practice) he considers his (so-called) desire as divine will, which finally opens his intuitive spiritual sight and becomes one with the cosmic will.

The power of prayer is indescribable. Its glory is ineffable. Only sincere devotees realise its usefulness and splendour. Prayer should be done with reverence, faith and non-expectation of fruits. It should be done with a heart full of devotion. O ignorant man: Do not argue about the efficacy of prayer. You will be deluded. There is no arguing in spiritual matters. Intellect is a finite and frail instrument. Do not trust this.

Remove the darkness of your ignorance now, through the light of prayer.

7 JUNE - TEST OF SINCERITY

Essentially, prayershouldbeselflessasfaraspossible.Weshouldfirstpray for the good of others, for the welfareandpeaceoftheworldandforourownspiritualevolution. We should pray for the eradicationofourevilqualities,forwisdomandknowledge,forgoodness and saintliness.

An aspirantshouldalwaysprayfortheremovalofhisignorance.Hisgoal is to realise the truth and to freehimselffromthemeshesofthosethingsthatareunreal.His goal is to realise his essential divine nature.

At timesevensincereprayerisnotrespondedtobutthisshouldnotbeallowed to mar our faith or sincerityortodiscourageordepressus.Itshouldbeconsideredasanecessity, as a test of our sincerity, our serenity and our faith in God.

Attimesthisirresponseisoftenrepeated.Thedevoteebecomesbewildered; he begins to lose faithinGod;hemayevenbedivertedfromthepath.Indeeditisherewemust show our patience, oursteadfastnessandourfaithinhisgrace.Godoftentestsuswithseverest trials but does it meanthatheisunkind,thathedoesnotwishtopayheedtoourprayers? Obviously not. It is a testthattheaspirantmustpassthrough.Hisfaithmaynotbestrongenough; the dross of his mind may not have been cleaned yet; his heart may not be pure yet.
Howcantheaspirantstrengthenhisfaith?Howcanhecleansehismind? How can he purify his heart?Onlythroughtests,trials,tribulations.Justasgoldispurifiedby passing it through the crucibleseveraltimes,soalsotheheartmustbecomepure,thefaithmust become unflinching, through passing through the crucible of trials again and again.
But at theultimateendallprayersarefulfilledandgratifiedwiththehighest fulfilment. Therefore when wepraytoGodorwishtoreceivegracefromhim,wemustbeprepared to accept joyfully his irresponseandthetrialsandtribulations.

8 JUNE - SERVICE OF GOD

Padasevana is serving the Lord's feet. Actually this can be done only by Lakshmi or Parvati. No mortal being has got the fortune to practise this method of bhakti (devotion), for the Lord is not visible to the physical eyes.

However, it is possible to serve the image of God in idols and, better still, by taking the whole of humanity as God. Padasevana is service of the sick, service of the poor- service of the whole of humanity at large. Service of the Lord's feet can be done through formal worship to murtis (or idols) or to a mental image of God.

Observing the sacred feet of the Lord, again and again, with devotional and eager eyes, worshipping them, serving them, sipping the sacred water with which the Lord's feet have been washed, worshipping the wooden sandals of the Lord, meditating on them, praying to them, taking the dust of the Lord's feet and applying it to the forehead, washing the heart with the dust of the Lord's feet, respecting the holy shrines and places of pilgrimage and places where God incarnated himself for the good of humanity, regarding the Ganges as directly flowing from the feet of the Lord, worshipping, bathing in and drinking of such divine water of the Ganges - all these are different forms of serving the Lord's feet. This kind of devotion destroys all worldly attachments and allows the mind to think exclusively of God.

Worship God. Praise him. Seek enlightenment. Realise divine bliss. Do not put any conditions to God - worship for worship's sake. In worship the sense of individuality is lost in contemplation of the object worshipped.

To gaze at the divine pictures even for some moments daily is a great blessing. It will purify your mind. Meditation is mental worship of the Lord. Singing the Lord's name (or kirtan) is vocal worship. Service of living beings with love and bhava, is physical worship. If the worshipper of the deity thinks that he is separate from the deity, he is a beast. Devout worship of the Lord's lotus feet means perfect freedom from all fear.

9 JUNE - WORSHIP

An idol (murti or vigraha),sun,fire,water,Ganges,saligram(symbol of Visnu), linga (symbol of Siva), are all symbols ofGodwhichhelptheaspirantstoattainone-pointedness of mind and purity of heart. A symbolisabsolutelyindispensableforfixingthemind. The Christians also have the symbol - the cross.Agrossmindneedsaconcretesymbol;asubtle mind needs an abstract symbol. Even a vedantinhasthesymbolOmforfixingthewandering mind. In the beginning concentration or meditationisnotpossiblewithoutasymbol.

The mind is disciplinedinthebeginningbyfixingthemindonaconcrete object or symbol. Later, when it has beenrenderedsteadyandsubtle,itcanbefixedonan abstract idea such as Aham Brahma Asmi(Iamtheinfinite).

The devoteesuperimposes,ontheconcreteidol,theLordand his attributes. He does sadashopacharapujafortheidol-thesixteenkindsofrespectorservice of the Lord. This consists of paadyam(waterforwashingthefeet),arghyam(watertowash hands), asana (seat), snana (bathing),offeringofclothing,applyingsandalpaste,offeringflowers (arcan), burning incense, wavingoflightsandcamphor,foodoffering(mahanaivedyam)etc. The wandering mind is fixed now inthisformofworship.Theaspirantgraduallyfeelsthenearness of the Lord. He attains purity of heart and slowly annihilates his egoism.

He whohasdonepuja(worship)withflowersandotherarticlesof worship for some time, can taketomentalworship.Inmentalpujathedevoteeoffersallofferings to the Lord mentally. This is anadvancedformofworship.Itpurifiestheheartandsteadiesthe mind. It fills the mind with purelovefortheLordandgraduallytransmutesmanintoadivinebeing.

Eveninworshippingasmallidol,hehastorepeatthePurushaSukta (a sacred hymn) and to think of theviratpurusha(cosmicform)-withcountlessheads,countless eyes, countless hands, who extendsbeyondtheuniverseandalsooftheLordoratmanwhodwells in the hearts of all.

The aspirantgraduallybeginstofeelthattheLordheworshipsisin the idol, in the hearts of all creatures andinthenamesandformsofallinthisuniverse.He begins to feel His presence everywhere.

10 JUNE - WORSHIP One can realiseGodthroughworshipofmurti(oridol).TheworshipoftheLordinsaguna (concrete) formisagreataidforvedanticrealisationalso,andfortherealisationoftheLordin His all-pervading,formlessaspect.Theworshipofthemurtiisveryessentialforthepurposeof concentrationandmeditationinthebeginning.Suchworshipisnotinanywayahindrancetothe attainmentofGod-consciousness.Thosewhovehementlyattackmurtipuja(worship)aregroping in thedarknessofextremeignorance.Theyhavenorealknowledge.Theyenterintovaindebates to showthattheyarelearnedpersonsandhavenotdoneanysadhana(spiritualpractice).Idle talkingistheirrealprofession.Theyhaveunsettledthemindsofcountlesspersons.Thewhole worldworshipssymbolsandmurtisinsomeformorother.Asoneadvancesinmeditation,the form melts into the formless and the aspirant becomes one with the formless essence.

Emptyvesselsonlymakesound.Apracticalmanwhodoesmeditationandworship,whoisfullof knowledgeandrealdevotion,keepsalwayssilence.Heinfluencesandteachesothersthrough silence. He only knows whether a murti is necessary in the beginning or not.

Prasadais'thatwhichgivespeace.Duringkirtan(chanting),worship(puja,havanandarati),milk, sweetsandfruitareofferedtotheLord.Pujaisdonewithbael(woodapple)leaves,flowers,tulsi (basil),sacredash,andthesearelatergivenasprasadafromtheLord.Theyarechargedwith mysteriouspowers,bythechantingofmantras(sacredhymns)duringpujaandhavan(worship with thefireasthesacredsymbol).

Prasadaisagreatpurifier.Prasadaisapanaceaforallills;itisaspiritualelixir.Prasadaisthegrace of the Lord.Itisanembodimentofshakti(divineenergy).Prasadaisdivinityinmanifestation. Many sincereaspirantsgetwonderfulexperiencesfromprasadaalone.Manyincurableillnesses are curedbyprasadaalone.Prasadaenergises,vivifies,invigoratesandinfusesdevotion.Itshould be takenwithgreatfaith.Thosebroughtupinmoderneducationandculturehaveforgottenthe glory ofprasada.Prasadagivesgoodhealth,longlife,peaceandprosperitytoall.Thesacredash is the prasadaofLordSiva.Itisappliedtotheforehead.Kumkum(vermilionpowder)isthe prasada of Sri Devi or Shakti. It is applied at the space between the eyebrows.

11 JUNE - WORSHIP

A devotee repeatsthemantra(mysticformula)oftheLordduringworshipandtoucheshisheart, his head, tuftofhair,armsandhands.Thereischaitanya(consciousness,power)ineveryletter of the mantra.Throughrepetitionofthemantraandthetouchingofthepartsofthebodywith the repetitionofthemantra,theaspirantisgraduallydivinised.Thereisspiritualawakening. Spiritualcurrentsaregenerated-tamas(inertia)andrajas(impurity)aredestroyedandheisfilled with puresatva(purity).Hebecomesidenticalwiththeobjectofworship.Heattainsthesame world of,orproximitywith,orthesameformof,orabsorptioninto,theLord. For a sagethereisnosuchthingasinsentientmatter.EverythingisVasudevaorchaitanya.The devotee actuallybeholdstheLordintheidol.Buttheworshipdoesnotstopthere.Thesadhaka (seeker) istakenstepbysteptohigherstagesofdevotionandsamadhi(orcommunion)through the worshipoftheidol.Thoughheworshipstheidol,hehastokeepbeforehismentaleyethe all-pervading Lord. He has to feel the Lord's presence in his heart and in all objects also. The ways andrulesofworship,describedintheHinduscripturesarescientificallyaccurateand highly rational.Itisonlyignorantpeoplewhohavenotstudiedthescriptures,whohavenot associated withthedevoteesandgreatsouls,thatvilifyworshipofidolsormurtis. The aspirant whoworshipstheidolinthebeginning,beholdstheLordeverywhereanddevelops para bhakti (supremedevotion);hebeholdsthewholeworldastheLord.Allideasofgoodand bad, right and wrong,etc.,vanish.Hisvisionbafflesdescription.Glorytosuchexalteddevotees who are veritable godsonearth,wholivetoliftothersfromthequagmireofsamsara(world-existence) and savethemfromtheclutchesofdeath. Tulsidas realised theall-pervadingessence.Hehadcosmicconsciousness.Hecommunedwith the all-pervading, formlessLord.AndyethispassionforLordRama,withbowinhand,didnot vanish. When he wenttoBrindavan,andsawthemurtiofLordKrishna,withfluteinhand,he said: "I will not bow myheadtothisform".AtoncetheformofLordKrishnaassumedtheform of Lord Rama. Then onlyTulsidasbowedhishead.Miraalsorealisedheridentitywiththeall-pervading Krishna and yetshenevertiredofrepeating,againandagain,"MyGiridharNagar".

12 JUNE - PROSTRATION Vandana is prayer and prostration. Humble prostration - touching the earth with eight limbs of
the body, with faith and reverence, before a form of God, or prostration to all beings, knowing them to be the forms of the one God, getting absorbed in divine love of the Lord - is termed prostration to God.

The Bhagavatam says: "The sky, air, fire, water, earth, stars, planets, cardinal points, trees, rivers, seas and all living beings constitute the body of God. The devotee should bow before everything in absolute devotion, thinking that he is bowing before God Himself."

Sri Krishna says to Uddhava: "Giving no attention to people who laugh in ridicule, forgetting the body, and insensible to shame, one should fall prostrate on the ground, bowing to all beings even down to the dog, the cow and the ass." Doing prostrations to others makes a man humble.

If a man entertains Narayana bhava (feeling the presence of God in all) when he does prostrations,
this will help him to realise that whatever he sees is God, that there is nothing but God, that the manifestation is the virat (cosmic) aspect of Brahman. This will help to develop devotion. Always feel that you are prostrating to the Lord himself - all living creatures, all objects are forms of God only.

May you all attain God-consciousness through the practice of prema (love) yoga. May your heart be filled with prema for the Lord. May the blessings of the Lord be upon you all. May you shine as bhagavatas, singing the Lord's name, disseminating divine prema and radiating joy, peace and bliss everywhere:

SIVA'S FINAL TEACHING

Purify your heart throughselfless service,
Be devoted to the Lord andobtain his grace,
Through japa (repetitionofGod's name),
kirtan (chanting), prayerandself-surrender.
Practise asanas (postures),pranayama (yoga breathing), etc.
Abandon egoism, desire,angerand greed.
Control all the senses.
Cultivate discriminationanddispassion.
Practise the four means.
Hear the srutis (scriptures).
Reflect and meditate ceaselessly.
You will attain self-realisation.

13 JUNE - GOD AS MASTER AND FRIEND

Daasya bhakti is loveofGodastheservantofGod.ToserveGodandtocarryouthiswishes-realising his virtues,.hisnature,hismysteryandhisgloryandconsideringoneselfasaslaveof the supreme master-thisisdaasyabhakti.Servingandworshippingthemurtis(images)inthe temples, sweepingthetemples,meditatingonGodandservingHimlikeaslave(mentally), serving the saintsandthesages,servingthedevoteesofGod,servingthepoorandthesick,is also includedindaasyabhakti.

To followthewordsofthescriptures,toactaccordingtotheinjunctionsofthevedasconsidering them to be direct words of God, is daasya bhakti. Association with and service of love-intoxicated devotees and service of those who have knowledge of God, is daasya bhakti. The purpose of this is tobeeverwithGod,inordertoofferyourservicestohimandwinhisdivinegraceandthereby attain immortality.

Arjuna prays with the sentiment of a servant and a disciple in order to get the grace of Lord Krishna: "O Lord: I am your disciple. I have taken refuge in you. Teach me." The aspirant should completely give himself up to God and should not retain any personal reservations. Ananya bhakti is totalrelinquishmentoftheselftoGod.

Sakhya bhava is the cultivation of the friend-sentiment with God. The Bhagavatam says: "Oh how wonderful is the fortune of the people of Vraja, of cowherd Nanda, whose dear friend is the perfect, eternal Brahman or absolute bliss."

To be alwayswiththeLord,totreathimasone'sowndearrelativeorfriend,belongingtoone's own family,tobeinhiscompanyatalltimes,tolovehimasone'sownself,issakhyabhavaof bhakti-marga (the path of devotion). The devotee takes up with eagerness any work of the Lord, leaving asideeventhemostimportantandurgentandpressingpersonalwork,andtotally concerning himselfwiththeloveoftheLord.Howdorealfriendsloveinthisworld?Whatan amount of lovepassesbetweenthem.Suchloveisdevelopedfor God-physicalloveisturned into spiritual love.Thereisatransformationofthemundaneintotheeternal.

It is a great pitythatsakhibhava(theattitudeofGod'sbeloved)ismisunderstood.Thejiva chaitanya (individualsoul)istherealsakhi.Sakhibhavaispurelyaninternalstate,notamere external show.Theindividualsoulisunitedwiththesupremesoulbyself-surrender.Thelover and the belovedbecomeone.Thisistheacmeofbhakti.Thisistheculminatingpoint.Bhakti begins with twoandendswithone.

14 JUNE - THE NATURE OF SURRENDER In atma nivedana (self-surrender) the devotee offers everything to God, including his body, mind
and soul. He keeps nothing for himself. He has no personal, independent existence. He has become part and parcel of God. God takes care of him and God treats him as Himself. Grief and sorrow, pleasure and pain, the devotee treats these as gifts sent by God and does not attach himself to them. He considers himself a puppet, as an instrument in the hands of God. He does not feel egoistic for he has no ego - his ego has gone over to God.

This devotee does not feel it is his duty to look after his wife, children etc., for he himself has no independent existence apart from God. God will take care of all for He knows how to lead the world in the right path. He has no sensual craving, for he has no body; it has been offered to God. He only feels the presence of God and nothing else. He has no enemies or friends for he has given himself up to God who has no enemies or friends. He has no anxiety for he has attained everything by attaining the grace of God. He does not even have the thought of salvation - he merely wants God and nothing but God.

This devotee is satisfied with the love of God, for by that there is nothing that is not attained. What is there to attain when God has sent his grace upon the devotee? The devotee does not want to become sugar but to taste the sugar - there is pleasure in tasting sugar but not in becoming sugar itself. So the devotee feels that there is supreme joy more in loving God than in becoming God. "I am Thine", says this devotee, knowing that God will take complete care of him.

Mira abandoned everything. She renounced her kingdom, husband, relatives, friends and property. She remembered Lord Krishna all day and all night. She shed tears of love (prema). She sang His name with devotion. She gave up eating food and her body became emaciated. Her mind was ever absorbed in Lord Krishna. Only then did Lord Krishna shower His grace upon her.

15 JUNE - SURRENDER

Surrender is ishvarapranidhana. The devotee consecrates all his works and their fruits to the Lord. He has no will of his own. He says unto the Lord, "I am thine. All is thine. Thy will be done. Thou art just. Thou doest everything for me. I am an instrument in thy hands."

In surrendering one's will to the Lord, his will becomes one with the cosmic will. He becomes one with the Lord. There is no loss in surrendering one's will to the Lord.

Self-surrender is atma-nivedana, or prapatti. This is the highest bhakti (devotion). The gopis of Vrindavan, Radha and Mira surrendered everything at the feet of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna was their all. In Kathopanishad it is said, "The Lord chooses that man who has surrendered himself, reveals himself unto him and bestows the highest wisdom on him."

The two obstacles to self-surrender are egoism and desire. Egoism and desire wage guerilla war. They assume various forms and assail the devotee again and again. Be on the alert. Be ever vigilant. Slay the egoism and desires beyond resurrection. Then alone will you be safe.

Your sadhana shakti (ability to practise) is grace of the Lord. Guru is grace of the Lord. Sticking to the spiritual path is grace of the Lord. Progress in sadhana is grace of the Lord. Revelation or intuition is grace of the Lord. Descent of divine light is grace of the Lord. Human birth is Lord's grace. All sorts of aids to sadhana you get such as kutir (cottage), food, clothing, medical aid, good place for meditation, books, satsanga (good company), etc., are his grace only.

Itis difficult to eradicate theself-assertive nature. Every man has built his personality from the beginning of time. He has allowed the rajasic (impure) mind to have its own way. This personality has grown very strong, it ishard to make it pliable and elastic. The self-assertive man wants to dominate over others; he doesnot want to hear the opinions of others, even though they may be sound, logical and tenable.

16 JUNE - I AM THINE, O LORD

Do not bother about taking care of your body. God will save it if he needs it for further service. Surrender it at his feet and rest in peace. He will take care of it. A real devotee says, "Let me take millions of births; it does not matter, but let me be attached to the lotus-feet of Lord Hari. Let me have spontaneous devotion to the Lord. Let me be endowed with purity, spiritual strength, the spirit of selfless service and other divine virtues."

If you simply say, without real inner feeling, "I am thine, O Lord," this will not constitute real integral self-surrender. This should come right from the core of your heart. You must be prepared for a radical change. You should not stick to your old habits, ways and motives. You should not expect that everything should happen in the way you want. You should live to carry on the divine purpose. You should not think of those ambitions which the mind likes to gratify. You should not think of using divine grace or the divine force for your own purposes - then the irrepressible ego will assert itself in various ways and refuse to give up its old habits.

The ego tries to get everything from the divine but it totally declines to give itself to the divine. That is the reason why aspirants do not make any substantial progress on the spiritual path even after doing sadhana (spiritual practice) for several years.

There is no loss in self-surrender. You get from the Lord everything. You enjoy all the divine aisvarya (wealth of divine attributes) of the Lord. The whole wealth of the Lord belongs to you. Siddhis and riddhis (psychic powers) will roll under your feet. You become one with the Lord. You are freed from all wants and desires and cravings. The spiritually hungry and the really thirsty aspirant who yearns for the vision of the Lord, turns towards the divine and is quite willing, eager and happy to consecrate his body, life and mind and soul at the feet of the Lord.

The first stage of self-surrender is only a firm resolve to surrender oneself to God, or to his preceptor. A sadhaka (seeker) who has dedicated his life for the service of his teacher or the service of humanity or for attaining self-realisation, is not bound by the actions he performs subsequent to his self-surrender. Self-surrender becomes perfect only after God-realisation.

17 JUNE - GOD-REALISATION

Divine loveoverflowstoothersonceithasfilledyourheart.LoveGodwithallyourheartandyour - neighbourasyourself-thisisthesecretofGod-realisation.Lovebreaksdownallbarriers.Love is an opensesametoaninfiniterealmofblissimmortal.ThelearnedtalkofGodbutthepoor love Himintheirhearts.

Beyondlogic,beyondintellect,beyondreasonisthefeelingofloveandtheembodimentoflove - whichisGod.Arguenot.RealiseHim.TalktoHimwiththelanguageoftheheart.

Do notgaugetheLord'sloveandmercybythematerialprosperityHegivesyou.Infinitelymore valuableisthespiritualtreasureHebestowsuponHistruedevotee.Loveisthedew-dropofdivine grace.

Cosmicloveisthethresholdtothelimitlessdomainof Brahmicbliss.Cosmicloveissynonymous with supremeself-sacrificeoregolessness.Inallbeingslivestheone God,-thesupremebeing, the eternalLord.Thereforebowtoallbeingswithreverence,faithanddevotion.

Feel thatanother'sdifficultyisyoursandrelievehimofhisdifficulty.Thenaloneyouwillgrowin cosmic love.Loveisanactualsubstancethatyoucanusewithconfidence.Loveisapositive, concrete thing.

Lovevibratesintheformofservice,charity,generosityandbenevolence.Thereisunityoflife. Loveofone'sselfisthetrueloveofalllife.Allpatriotism,loveofone'sownnation,one'sown race,one'sownreligion,arebutlimitedkindsoflove.Humanloveisbutthestepping-stoneto divine or universal love.

Love all.Beholdtheonecommonconsciousnessthatindwellsallbeings,thatisimmanentinall namesandforms.Spreadthemessageofdivinelove,lightandworshipwhereveryougo.Love knows no fear. Love is the greatest power.

Love isthedivineforceofthisuniverse.Thepureryoumakeyourheart,thegreaterwillbethe powerofyourlove.Bekind,becompassionate,behumble,betolerant,begood,bejust,be natural. Love the eternal in every being. Make no distinctions between one being and another.

18 JUNE - SUPREME LOVE IS SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A devotee of para bhakti type is all-embracing and all-inclusive. He has cosmic love and the whole world is holy for him. He does not visit temples for worship, seeing the Lord in everything. He feels that the world is a manifestation of the Lord, and that all movements and actions are his sport. He has no dislike for faecal matter or dirt, for the outcaste, the scavenger, the cobbler, the beggar, the prostitute, or the thief. He says: "I see my sweet Lord everywhere. It is Hari who is playing the part of the prostitute, the thief, the dacoit, the scavenger:" He has an all-embracing, all-inclusive, exalted mental state. This cannot be described adequately in words, but must be felt. Mira, Gouranga, Hafiz, Tulsidas, Kabir. Ramdas - all enjoyed this state.

Namdev said to the dog: "O Vitthala, my dear, in the form of a dog, do not run away with the dry bread. It will affect your soft throat. Pray let me apply ghee (clarified butter) to the bread." He ran with ghee in a cup to the dog. Sri Ramakrishna prostrated before an outcaste girl: "O Mother Kali, I see thee in this girl." Eknath, a Maharashtrian bhakta, gave his ring voluntarily to the thief when the latter entered the house. "O thief: Take this ring also. Your duty is to steal things. Thou art Krishna. Keep up this sport." Have you understood the sublime state of these exalted bhaktas who had a new angle of vision? A day will come to you also. Exert and struggle.

Para bhakti is self-knowledge only. Sri Sankara, who was established in the wisdom of pure non-dualism, was a great bhakta of Lord Hari and Devi. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Kali and obtained self-knowledge through Swami Totapuri, his guru. Appayya Dikshitar was a devout bhakta of Lord Siva. Para bhakti and self-knowledge are one. The only slight difference is that a bhakta uses his emotion, while a sage of wisdom uses his will and intellect. Bhakti begins with love, while jnana or self-knowledge begins with thinking and self-analysis. The end of both is the same, union with the divine.

19 JUNE - GRACE PURIFIES THE HEART

Behold the Lord's grace in every inch of his creation. On a hot summer day you enjoy the delicious sweet juice of grapes, cucumber, oranges and pomegranates and the cool Ganges water of Rishikesh and Hardwar. This is the Lord's grace. When you suffer from a serious ailment you get immediate relief and cure from herbs this is the Lord's grace. When you walk in the dark night, the stars twinkle and throw light on your path - this is the Lord's grace. When you are unable to bear extreme pain you become unconscious - this is the Lord's grace. When the weather is sultry, a gentle breeze springs up and refreshes you - this is the Lord's grace.

The subtle forms of lust, anger, egoism, pride, etc., can only be totally destroyed through the grace of the Lord. However hard you may strive and do sadhana (spiritual practice), these subtle forms cannot be eradicated through your sadhana alone. Only the Lord's grace completely purifies your heart.

It is the Lord's grace only that stirs the aspirants to do right exertion. But do not sit idle and say: "Oh the Lord's grace will do everything for me, why should I do sadhana?" This is wrong philosophy. God helps those who help themselves. God's grace will only descend on those persons who exert themselves. You cannot expect the Lord to do self-surrender for you. Be up and doing. Strive. Plod. Persevere. The Lord will shower his grace upon you.

It is the grace of the Lord that gives rise to sincere satsankalpa (good and true thoughts and pure resolves). You can be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. One moment you may be groping in the darkness, the next moment you can attain illumination.

There is an ignition point of the soul. When it is connected, man is transformed. His life is turned from its former worldly ways into a new divine life. He is awakened spiritually.

This serenity will deepen into unshakable peace amidst all the troubles and difficulties of life. Then only insight and intuition will dawn. Then only you will attain wisdom, perfection and freedom.

20 JUNE - THE DEVOTEE'S VISION

The bhaktaisblissfulatalltimes.Hismindcannotthinkofanythingforeverythingis God. "Yatra yatra manoyatitatratatrasamadhayah-Whereverthemindgoesthereitexperiencessamadhi" - for it doesnotfindanyobjectofenjoyment.Godfillseveryspeckofspaceandthewhole world is clothedinthegloryofGod.

The saintandthesinner,thevirtuousandthevicious,thegoodandthebad,themanand the animal, allareformsofGod.Howcantheminddealwiththeminanyundivineway?There, the mind experiencessamadhiithasconsciousnessbutnoobject.Samadhiisthoughtless consciousness,objectlessconsciousness-thisisparabhakti.Thisisthesameasvedantic realisation. The effect is the annihilation of the ego or the destruction of the mind.

God, whoissupremelypowerful,supremelywiseandsupremelyblissful,pervadesthe entire atmosphereandtheearth.Heistheearthandtheheaven;Heisfather,mother,brother, sister; He is theconsummationofallloveandaspiration,ofalldesireandambition;Heisthestoppage of all mentalvrittisandHeistheidealtobeattained.

Control themindandannihilatetheego-thisistheessenceofallyogas.Itistheidealof bhakti yoga, whichisaverysweetandeasymethodorprocedure.Onehasnotgottocurb one's emotionsandonehasnottorunawaytotheforests.Hehastodirecthisemotionstowards God. He has toseeGodaspresentintheworld.Thisistheessenceofbhaktisadhana(practice). Bhakti isthusonlyareflectionoftheloveforttheselfwhichtheUpanishadsdeclare.Only the names aredifferent:onecallsitselfandtheothercallsitGod.Namesdonotmatter;it is the feeling thatcounts,andthatisthesameinboth.

Self-surrenderisthehighestformofbhakti.Itissurrenderoftheegoorindividuality. What remains afterthatisthe'absolute'ofthevedantins.Bhaktisurrenderstheegoandavedantin disintegratestheego.Inboththeegoisnotthere-theiridealsarethesame.Whetherone eats rice or wheat,itisallthesame-thepurposeofbothistoappeasethehunger.Sowhether you follow bhaktiorvedanta,theeffectistheannihilationoftheego.Thisisthetruth.

21 JUNE - SUPREME LOVE OF GOD

Life is complexnowadays.Thestruggleisverykeen.Hereisaneasywayofworshipping the Lord.
Consider your house as the temple of the Lord.
Your wifeandchildrenandothersastheholycompanyofthebhaktas(devotees).
Considereverywordyouspeakasthejapa(repetition)oftheLord'snameand as praise of him.
Consider every action as service of the Lord.
And yourlyinginbedasprostrationsbeforetheLord.
And yourdailywalkandmovingabout,asperambulationsoftheLord.
ConsiderthelightsyouburnintheeveningasthewavingoflightstotheLord.
Consider sleep as samadhi (superconscious state).
Give food and drink as offering to the Lord, then take it as his prasad (gift).
This is an easy way to worship the Lord.

"HowshallIwashthyfeetwithholywater,OLord,whentheveryGangesflows from thy feet?

How shall I give thee a seat O Lord?
Thouartall-pervading!
How shall I wave lights for thee O Lord?
The sun and the moon are thy eyes: Shall I offer flowers to thee?
Thou art the very essence of the flowers."

This attitude is called para-puja (highest worship).
Feel the presence of the Lord everywhere.
He dwells in the chambers of your heart too.
He glitters in your eyes.
He is the breath in your nostrils.
He is nearer to you than your jugular vein.
Behold Him in every face.
You will attain happiness here and hereafter if you worship God in this way.
Life is short and time is fleeting.
Start doing this right now.

WhyshouldyouroamhitherandthithertofindGod,thesupremebeing?Why should you go in vaintotheforests?Why?Evenasintheflower,fragranceresides,evenasinthe fire, heat dwells -evensodoththeLordabide.SeekHimwithin,myfriend.SeekHimearnestly too.

22 JUNE - SEEK GOD WITHIN

Seek God withinyou,inyourheart.Seekhimnotelsewhere.Seekhimwithfaith.SeeknotGod for favours. SuchfavourswillnotbringyouneartoGod.Cultivateniskamyabhakti(motiveless devotion) - pineforhisgraceandmercy.Quickenandenlivenyourfaithin God.Lettheflameof faith grow brighterandbrighterdaily.FeelHispresenceeverywhere.ObtainHisgracethrough faith, devotionandtotalself-surrender.

Cling to the feetoftheLord.Leadthelifedivine.Rollthebeadsandmentallyrepeathisname. Sing his praisesandrememberHimatalltimes.Fixyourmindonthelotus-feetoftheLordatall times. See theLordinallobjects.SingtheLord'snames.

Meditate on HisformfirstthenmeditateonHisall-pervadingessence.Withdrawthesensesfrom their objects andgazewithin.Concentrateontheheart-searchforHimthere.

Practise ahimsa,satyamandbrahmacharya(non-violence,truthandpurity).Sayfromthebottom of your heart,"Iamthine.ThywillbedoneOLord."Sticktodharma(rightconduct).Controlthe mind andthesenses.Killegoism,lust,greed,hatred,etc.

Serve thesaints.Serveyourguru-guruandGodareone.ChantthenameandpraisesoftheLord. MeditateonHisdivineattributes.ConstantlyremembertheLordandHispresence.Serveand worshiptheLord.ClingtothenameoftheLord.Practisethereligionofsacrifice.Dedicateyourself to God.Walkinhumilityandlove.ThisisthewaytoGod-realisation.

Here aresomeauxiliariestobhakti.Studythelivesofsaints,againandagain.Youwillgetnew inspiration and you will be elevated, renovated and transformed.
Japa (repetitionofGod'sname),kirtan(chanting),prayer,serviceofsaints,meditation,smarana (rememberingGod),areaidstoGod-realisation.Shunevilcompany.Liveinthecompanyofsaints. Serve the sickandthepoor.Leadasimplelife.

Cultivate divinevirtuessuchashumility,tolerance,mercy,kindness,courage,selflessness,cosmic love, truthfulness,purityandcelibacy.

23 JUNE - UNIVERSAL LOVE

The only sara-vastu(thingofvalue)inthisworldisprema(ordivinelove).Itiseternal,infiniteand undecaying.Physicalloveismoha(passionorinfatuation).Universalloveisdivinelove.Cosmic love (visvaprema)anduniversallovearesynonymousterms.Godislove.LoveisGod.Selfishness, greed, egoism,vanity,prideandhatredcontracttheheartandstandinthewayofdeveloping universal love.

Developuniversallovegraduallythroughselflessservice,satsanga(associationwithholyones), prayer,recitationofguru-mantra(mantraoraholywordgivenbyaguru),etc.Thusallbarriers are brokenandnowtheheartwillexpandinfinitely. It is very

easytotalkofuniversallove.Butwhenyouwanttoputitintoactualpracticeitbecomes extremelydifficult.Petty-mindednessofallsortscomesintheway.Old,wrongsamskaras (impressions)whichyouhavecreatedbyyourwrongmodeoflifeinthepast,actasstumbling blocks.Throughirondetermination,strongwill-power,patience,perseveranceandvichar(right enquiry),youcanconquerallobstaclesquiteeasily.ThegraceoftheLordwilldescendonyouif you are sincere, my dear friends!

Feelthatthewholeworldisyourbody,yourownhome.Meltordestroyallbarriersthatseparate manfromman.Anyideaofsuperiorityisignoranceordelusion.Developall-embracinglove.Unite withall.Separationisdeath.Unityiseternallife.Feelthatthebodyisamovingtempleof God. Whereveryouare,whetherathome,attheoffice,therailwaystationorthemarket,feelthatyou are in this temple.

ConsecrateeveryactasanofferinguntotheLord.Transmuteeveryworkintoyogabyofferingits fruits to God.Haveakarta-sakshi-bhava(feeling:"Iamanon-doer,witness")ifyouareastudent of vedanta.Havenimittabhava(feeling:"Iamaninstrument")ifyouareastudentofbhakti.Feel that all beingsareimagesofGod,thatthisworldisindweltbytheLord.Feelthatonepower,or God, worksthroughallhands,seesthroughalleyes,hearsthroughallears.Youwillbecomea changed being.Youwillenjoypeaceandbliss.

May Lord HaritakeyoualltoHisbosomandbatheyouwiththewatersofsweetlove:Mayyour heart be filledwithcosmiclove.

24 JUNE - THE DIVINE SECRET

True wisdom is love.Thewayisonlyone-lovedivine-thatisall.Lovedivineisagreatpower;it is the basis of all religiouslife.Divinelovehasnosex.ItseesGodinallandallinGod.Wherelove is, there God is. Fromlovetheworldisborn,byloveitissustainedandintoloveitenters.Hewho loves not, knows notGod,becauseGodislove.

Open the floodgatesofyourheartfortheinpouringoflovedivine.Thepathisthroughlove-every moment of separationisapangofdeathtotheloversandthedevotees.Dayandnightthe flame of love burnsintheheartsofthedevotees.Solacecomestothedevoteeintheflowof tears. The creeper ofloveisnourishedbytheeyes.

Love is not a passingsentimentorafeebleemotion-itisstrong,deep,enduring.Thereisreal love only when thereistrueinwardidentificationwiththelifeofanotherentity.Purelovedivine communes with thebeloved,withunity,withtheone,theall-pervadingessenceofbliss.

The most importantaspectofspirituallifeisbhakti(devotion),andthesecretofbhaktiislove,a love which embracesall.Companyofsaints,kirtan(chanting)oftheLord'snames,studyofthe Bhagavatam andserviceofthesaintswillcreatelovefortheLord.

Love of the bodyorskinispassion.LoveofGodisprema(ordevotion).Itispurelove,lovefor love's sake. To lovesomeoneforattainingaselfishgain,isselfishlove.Itbindsyoutothisearth. To love all beings,asmanifestationsoftheLordhimselfispureloveandleadstoliberation.Pure love redeems andpurifiestheheartandtransmutesyouintodivinity.Godisanembodimentof love - an oceanoflove.IfyouwishtoattainGod-realisationyoumustalsobecomean embodiment oflove.Loveinspires,illuminesandleadstheway.Loveisgivingandnottaking. Love cements thebrokenheart.Itisthekeytoopenthedoortomoksha.

Love inspires love.Itisdivineelixir;itbestowsimmortality,supremepeaceandeverlastingjoy. Love is the goldenlinkwhichbindshearttoheart,mindtomindandsoultosoul.Lovenever reasons but ever profuselygives.Itisnotaffectedbyoffenceorinsult.Itlooksonlywiththeheart.

25JUNE-SONG OF IMMORTALITY

RamRamRamRam,JayaSitaRamJayaJaya Radheshyam.
Turn the gaze, draw the indriyas,
Still the mind, sharpen the intellect;
ChantOmwithfeeling,meditateonatma,
ChantRamwithfeeling,meditateonSitaram,
ChantShyamwithfeeling,meditateonRadheshya,
O children of light, will you drink not,
Won'tyoudrinknot,thenectarofimmortality? (Ram Ram…..)
All karmas (are) burnt now,
You have become a jivanmukta,
That blessed state turiyatita
No words can describe,
O children of light, will you drink not,
Won'tyoudrinknot,thenectarofimmortality? (Ram Ram…..)
The grass is green, the rose is red,
And the sky is blue,
But the atman is colourless,
Formless and gunaless too,
O childrenoflight,willyoudrinknot,
Won't youdrinknot,thenectarofimmortality? (Ram Ram…..)
Life is short,timeisfleeting,
The worldisfullofmiseries,
Cut the knotofavidya,
And drinkthesweetnirvanicbliss,
O childrenoflight,willyoudrinknot,
Won'tyoudrinknot,thenectarofimmortality? (Ram Ram…..)
Feel the divine presence everywhere
See the divine glory all-round,
Then dive deep into the divine source,
Realise the infinite bliss,
O childrenoflight,willyoudrinknot,
Won'tyoudrinknot,thenectarofimmortality? (Ram Ram…..)
Do asanakumbak,mudra,
Shake the kundalini;
Then take it to sahasrar
Through cakras in the sushumna,
O childrenoflight,willyoudrinknot,
Won't youdrinknot,thenectarofimmortality? (Ram Ram…..)

26 JUNE - SONG OF GOVINDA

God is truth
God is bliss
God is peace
God is knowledge
God is love
God is light
Control the mind
Control the senses
Realise the self
This is the teaching
Of all the scriptures
Goal of life
Is God-realisation
Practise ahimsa
Speak the truth
Serve, love, give
Be good, do good
Be cheerful
Be courageous
Be patient
Be forgiving
Be moderate
In everything
Be regular
Get up at 4 a.m.
Enquire who am I?
There is no pleasure
In the sensual objects
Study daily
Gita, Upanishads
Do not smoke
Do not drink
Do not take bribes
This is bad
Time is precious
Do not waste a second
Utilise it
In japa, kirtan
In meditation

Govinda
Govinda
Govinda

27 JUNE-SONGOFVIBHUTIYOGA

Bhajo Radhe Krishna, Bhajo Radhe Shyama
Soham Soham, Sivoham Soham.
Om Om Om Om Om, OmOm Om Om Om.
I am neither mind nor body, immortal self I am,
Iamwitnessofthreestates,Iamknowledgeabsolute. (Om Om.....)

I am fragrance in jessamine, beauty in flowers,
Iamcoolnessintheice,flavourincoffee.(BhajoRadhe Krishna...)

I am greenness in the leaf, hue in the rainbow,
Iamtaste-budsinthetongue,essenceinorange.(Om Om.....)

I am mind of all minds, prana of all pranas,
Iamsoulofsouls,selfofallselves.(BhajoRadheKrishna...)

I am atman in all beings, apple of all eyes,
I am sun of all suns, light of all lights. (Om Om.....)

I am Pranava of all vedas, Brahman of Upanishads,
Iamsilenceinforests,thunderinallclouds.(BhajoRadhe Krishna...)

I am velocity in electrons, motion in science,
Iameffulgenceinthesun,waveintheradio.(OmOm.....)

I am support of this world, soul of this body,
Iamearofallears,eyeofalleyes.(BhajoRadheKrishna...)

I am time, space, dik and the controller,
IamGodofgods,guruandthedirector.(OmOm.....)

I am melody in music, in rag and raginins,
Iamsoundinether,shaktiinvirya.(BhajoRadheKrishna...)

I am power in electricity, intelligence in mind,
Iambrillianceinfire,penanceinascetics.(OmOm.....)

I am 'reason' in philosopher, 'will' in jnanis,
Iampreminbhaktas,samadhiinyogis.(BhajoRadhe Krishna...)

I am That I am, I am That I am,
I am That I am, I am That I am. (Om Om.....)

28 JUNE - THE SECRET OF YOGA SADHANA

I solemnly affirm that the disease of birth and death can be removed only through the divine panacea of mind-mastery; not through any other means. The path of annihilation of the mind will be most beneficial to you and will never generate the least of pains. If the mind is destroyed by dint of discrimination, then maya (illusion) will not afflict you. There is no other vessel on this earth to sail the ocean of rebirth, than mastery of this turbulent mind.

Tame the mind. Collect your thoughts. Keep the mind serene. Think not of evil. You will enter the realm of deathlessness, dominion of eternal bliss. Withdraw the senses from their objects. Collect the rays of the mind. Direct the mind towards the ajna cakra (or the space between the eyebrows) and fix it there steadily.

Understand the mind; know how to manage it. Mind abhors a vacuum. Aversion and desire, both are binding two monkeys sitting on the tree of the heart. While they continue to shake and agitate itthere can be no peace.

Man falls into the cycle of births and deaths through his own thoughts, his own ignorance. Liberation means nothing but the destruction of the impurities of the mind. If your mind is free and pure, you will not again enter into birth.

Control of the mind is not done in a day but by constant practice and sustained dispassion. Victory will be yours. Become a true hero. Have mastery over the mind. Enter the illimitable realms of bliss. Blessed is he who has controlled his mind and achieved self-conquest.

Dispassion, discrimination, renunciation and meditation are enemies of the mind. You can destroy the mind easily, if you possess these virtues. The mind manifests itself as the external world in the shape of pain and pleasure. The mind subjectively is consciousness, while objectively it is this universe. The mind has the potency of creating or undoing the world in the twinkling of an eye.

29 JUNE - THE SOURCE OF THE MIND

Creation, preservation, destruction, veiling and blessing are God's five kinds of actions. God is the ruler, the knower of the heart, and the prompter. He helps the student in a variety of ways - through dreams, the inner voice, talking through the mouths of others in conversation and in advice from friends.

Eternal bliss, supreme peace, eternal satisfaction, infinite happiness and unbroken joy can be had only in God. Attain God-consciousness or self-realisation through exclusive devotion to one aspect of the Lord, or by self-enquiry.

When, by analysing your own mind, you come face to face with something which is never destroyed, something which by its own nature is eternally pure, perfect, self-luminous and unchanging, you will no longer be miserable or unhappy. The nature of Brahman is sat-chidananda (existence-knowledge-bliss absolute). What limits the individual soul's vision? It is only the mind.

Between the atman (self) and the organs of the senses, a connecting link is necessary. We acknowledge the existence of an internal organ, the mind, through which perception takes place. If we do not admit the internal organ, there would result either perpetual perception or perpetual non-perception.

Perception results when there is conjunction of atman, the sense and the object (these are the three instruments of perception). If this effect did not follow, perpetual non-perception would take place.

Neither is the case however. Wehavetherefore to acknowledge the existence of an internal organ, on whose attention andnon-attention perception and non-perception take place. This is the argument for the existenceofthemind. Mind is nothing but a collection of impressions. It is a bundle of habits. It is a collectionofdesires arising from contact with different objects. It is a collection of feelings aroused byworldlybotherations; of ideas gathered from different objects. These desires, ideas and feelingschangeconstantly. Some of the old desires and feelings are constantly departing from thestore-house, the mind, and being replaced by new ones. This constant change does not in anywayinterfere with the harmony of mental operations.

Some ideas and feelings departandthosethat remain work in healthy co-operation with the new arrivals. They work in harmonyandthisharmony sustains the identity of mental existence.

30 JUNE - MIND IS ALL

Mind alone isthewholeworld,withitspains,oldage,death,sin,earth,water,fire,airandether, and all the internalorgans.Mindbindsman.Hewhohascontrolledhismindisaveritablegodon earth. We liveinaworldofthoughts.Firstthereisthethoughtandthenthereistheexpression of that thoughtthroughtheorganofspeech.

Thought andlanguageareintimatelyconnected.Lovingthoughtsupliftandencourageothers. Unkind thoughts,thoughtsofanger,bitternessandmaliceinjureothers.Thoughtsarethings. Sound, touch,taste,formandodour,thewaking,dreamanddeepsleepstates-allarethe products of themindonly.

Thoughts suchaspassion,anger,bondage,time-knowallthesetobetheresultsofthemind. The only truelaboratoryisthemind.Studyit,testitandthengobeyondit.Thenyouwillrealise the truth; thenyouwilldiscoverthehiddensoul.Onlyifyourmindisquietwillyouenjoypeace in your ownhome,asyouwillenjoyitintheforest.

Man hasamind.Butmindisnotman.Mindisagoodservant.Itisaninstrumentonly.Utiliseit tactfullyandproperly.Theprimerequisiteforhappinessiscontrolofthemindorlowerself.Your thought is imprinted on your face. Mind is a bridge that connects the human with the divine.

Your body,yourbusiness,yourhouse,areallonlyideaswithinyourownmind.Thoughtisa dynamic force.Goodthoughtisthefirstperfection;itistherealwealth.Emotionisthedriving force at thebackofthemind.Will-poweristhemasterkeytosuccess.Knowledge,thought, intellect andreasonareone.

Appetite, instinct,impulseanddesireareone.Emotion,ambition,spiritandcourageareone.The mind is the masterofthebody.Thesoulisthemasterofthemind.Thouart,inessence,immortal soul. Thou art abovebodyandmind.Alwaysrememberthissupremefactandliveinthe awareness of thy spiritualnature.

1 JULY - MIND AND MATTER

Mind is not a gross thing, visible and tangible; its existence is nowhere seen; its magnitude cannot be measured; it does not require space in which to exist. Mind and matter are two aspects or subject and object of one and the same all-full Brahman - who is itself neither and yet includes both.

Mind precedes matter; this is the vedantic theory. Matter precedes mind; this is the scientific theory. Mind is immaterial only in the sense that it has not the characteristics of ponderable matter. It is not immaterial in the sense that Brahman - pure spirit - is.

Mind is the subtle form of matter. Hence it is the prompter of the body. Mind is made of subtle, pure (satvic), atomic matter. Mind is all electricity. It is formed of the subtlest portion of food. The soul is the only source of intelligence; it is self-evident; it shines with its own light.

The organs or mind and senses derive their principle of activity and life from the soul. By themselves they are lifeless. Hence the soul is always the subject and never the object. Mind is the object of the soul.

It is a cardinal principle of vedanta that that which is an object for a subject is non-intelligent. Even the principle of self-consciousness is non-intelligence - it does not exist by its own light; it is the object of apperception to the soul.

Mind is composed of coarse or fine matter, according to the needs of the more or less unfolded consciousness connected with it. In the educated it is active and well-defined. In the undeveloped it is cloudy and ill-defined.

Absolute consciousness is common to all. It is one. All the workings of the mind are presented to the one common consciousness which is the witness of the mental vrittis. It is the mind that limits man, who is in reality, identical with Brahman.

This identity is realised when the veil of ignorance is removed. For Brahman, the mind is an object of perception. Atman directlycognises all the phenomena of the mind - desires, imagination, doubt, belief, shame, intellect,fear, etc., - and yet remains quite unattached and unaffected.

2 JULY - THE MIND BECOMES THE BODY

Thebodywithitsorgans,isnootherthanthemind.Thephysicalbodyistheoutward manifestationofthemind.Mindisthesubtleformofthephysicalbody.Themind,contemplating onthebody,becomesthebodyitself.Then,enmeshedinit,isafflictedbyit.Allbodieshavetheir seat in the mind. Should the mind be paralysed, the body will not evince any intelligence.

Themindperformsallactionsveryspeedilyinthelingasarira(subtlebody)andfluctuates thereby.Butthegrossbodyknowsnotanythingandisinert.Shouldthisgrossbodybedissolved, themindquicklyassumesafreshbody.Thisphysicalbodyisthemould,asitwere,ofthemind. It ismadebythemindfortheoutpouringofitsownenergy,foritsownenjoyment.Therebyit gains different experiences of this world through the organs of knowledge or perception.

Thebodyisreallyourthoughts,moods,convictionsandemotionsobjectivised,madevisibleto thenakedeye.Everycellinourbodysuffersorgrows,receivesalifeimpulseoradeathimpulse, fromeverythoughtthatentersthemind.Youtendtogrowintotheimageofthethingyouthink aboutmost.Whentheminddwellsonaparticularthought,adefinitevibrationofmatterisset up. This tends to repeat itself, to become a habit.

Thebodyfollowsthemindandimitatesthechanges.Everychangeinthoughtmakesavibration in yourmentalbodyandthis,whentransmittedtothephysicalbody,causesactivityinthe nervousmatterofthebrain.Andthisactivityinthebrainandnervecellscauseselectricaland chemical changes in the body.

Vedantaalsoadds:"SeeandfeelBrahmaneverywhere.ignorethenamesandforms."This teachesyoutodevelopatmabhava(feelingthattheselfisall)orBrahmabhava(feelingthat Brahman is all) by vichara (enquiry) and right thinking and meditation.

When anideaexclusivelyoccupiesthemind,amentalstateorbhava,correspondingtothenature of the ideacomesin.Thinkofyourenemy-theinimicalbhavawillmanifest.Thinkofmercyand universallove-prema(love)bhavaorkaruna(compassion)bhavawillmanifest.Thinkofuniversal service -seva(service)bhavawillmanifest.ThinkofLordKrishnaandhislilas-Krishna-prema bhava willmanifest.Feelingalwaysaccompaniesthinkingitislikefireandheat-inseparable.

3 JULY - HOW TO CULTIVATE RIGHT THINKING

Everythoughthasanimage,form,dimension,weight,shape,colour,etc.Thoughtisasmuch matterasapieceofstone.Atableisamentalimageplussomeexternalsomething.Whatever you seeoutsidehasacounterpartinthemind.Thepupilisasmallroundthingintheeyeandthe retinaisanothersmallstructureintheeye.Howisitthattheimageofabigmountain,seen throughthatsmallaperture,iscastontothemind?Howdoesthebigformofthemountainenter a tinyholeintheeye?Thisisamarvelofmarvels.Theimageofthemountainalreadyexistsin the mind.Themindislikeabig,vastsheetofcanvascloththatcontainsallthepicturesofthe objects seen outside.

Thoughtmovesandpassesfromonemantoanother.Thoughtreadilyinfluencespeople.Aman with strongthoughtscanreadilyinfluencepeoplewithweakthought.Telepathyisabranchof occult sciencewhereintheyogicantransmitmessagestoanymaninanypartoftheworld.A thoughtofangerorhatredsendsarrowsfromthementalfactorytowardsthepersonaimedat. It harmstheindividual,setsupdiscordanddisharmonyinthethoughtworldandcomesback againtothesenderandharmshimalso.Ifonecanunderstandtheeffectandpowerofthought, he willbemorecarefulinthemanufactureofhisthoughtsinhismentallaboratory.

Developthefacultyofproducingonlysatvic(pure)thoughtsbyprotractedmentaldiscipline, dieteticadjustments,repetitionofgoodhymnswithmeaning,goodcompany,thestudyofdivine books,japa(repetitionofGod'sname),meditation,pranayama(yogabreathing),prayer,etc.A good mancanhelphisfriend,eventhoughhelivesalongwayaway,bygoodthoughtsalone.Do not allowevilthoughtstoenteryourmentalfactory.Alwayswatchyourthoughts.Avoiduseless thinking. Conserve your mental energy.

To cultivatesublimethoughtsalwayskeepyourselfoccupiedindoingvirtuousdeedsandinthe study of religiousbooks.Destroyrandomthinking.Thinkofonlyonesubjectanditsdifferent aspects. Whenyoudothisneverallowanyotherthoughttoentertheconsciousmind.Againand again withdrawthemindtothesubjectonhand.Thentakeupanotherthoughtwhenyouhave exhausted thepreviousone.

By this practiceyouwilldeveloporganisedthinking.Thementalimageswillgainintensestrength and force; theywillbecomeclear-cutandwelldefined.Inordinarypersonsthementalimages are undefined.

4 JULY - ON VRITTI

The mindstuffischitta.Itisamentalsubstance.Vrittiorthought-waveisamodificationofthe mind-stuff.Itisaprocess.Justaswavesandbubblesarisefromthesurfaceoftheocean,soalso these vrittisariseonthesurfaceofthemind-ocean.Justasthesun'sraysemanatefromthesun, so also thesementalrays(modificationsofthevritti),emanatefromthemind-sun.Justasthesun merges itselfintothehorizonatsunset,bycollectingallitsrays,soalsoyouhavetomergeinthe sun of suns,absoluteconsciousness,eternalpeace,bycollectingallthedissipatedmentalrays and dissolvingtheminditself.

The functionofthevrittiinthemindistocausetheremovalofthecauseofignorancecovering objects.Grossignoranceisenvelopingallobjects.Whenitisremoved,thenperceptionofobjects becomespossible.

Throughitsowneffortthemindassumestheshapeofanyobject,andconcentratesuponitself. WhenthemindthinksofBrahman,thesoleultimatethoughtofBrahmanisformed.Bevigilant. Watchthemindanditsactivities.Theobjectdoesnotbindyou-itisthevritti,theidentification with the vritti, that causes attachment and bondage.

If youbecomeonewiththemind,bodyandvrittisyougetvarioussortsofmiseriesandsufferings. Thewholeuniverseiscreatedbythevrittisalone.Ifthesementalthought-wavessubsideyoucan attaintheabsolutestateofhighestpeaceandbliss.Justassoapcleansesthephysicalbody,even sojapa(repetition)ofanymantra,dhyana(meditation)andkirtan(chanting),togetherwiththe practiceofyamaandniyama(discipline),cleansethemindofallimpurities.Justasyounourish thephysicalbodywithfood,evensoyouwillhavetogivefoodforthemindandspiritualfoodfor the soul.

Onlywhenthemodificationsceasedoyouenterthesilence.Realisethis.Closetheeyes,drawin thesenses,stillthemind,silencethethoughts,sharpentheintellect,purifythechitta,meditate on Om and chant it with feeling. Enter the silence. Silence is atman, the centre - it is in the heart-cave.Whenthemindrunsfromoneobjecttoanother,thestateintheinterval,whereinyou become mindless, is Brahman.

5 JULY - WAVES OF GANGA

Experience isneverpossiblewithoutconsciousness.Anythingthatiseternalmustbeinfinite and unlimited. Consciousnessisunlimited;theconsciousnessoflimitationshowsthatconsciousness is greater thanlimitation.Perfectionistheattainmentofimmortallifeorpureconsciousness. The enquiry of, "WhoamI?"leadstoself-realisation(Brahma-jnana).Divinewisdomcanbeattained only by thosewhoareendowedwithpurity.Teartheveil.Realisethereality. Pain is

theeffectofnothavingwhatiswanted,orhavingwhatisnotwanted.Brahman is secondless.ThereisnopainorwantinBrahman.Thereforepainisimpossibleintheabsolute. Contact isthemotherofpain.Theabsolutecanhavenocontactsandthereforenopain.Brahman is free fromallwantsanddesiresbecauseitincludeseverythinginitself.Thereforeitis an embodimentofbliss. Bliss is

notanattribute.Itistheveryconstitutiveessenceoftheself,oratman.Astheself is absolute innature,itsblissisalsoabsolute.ThisisthesameasBrahman.

Annihilatetheego.Reachthegoalhereandnow.Taketheinneressenceandattainperfection. Relax notthekeenvigilanceagainstyourmostsubtlefoes-egoismanddesire.Wherecan you see theLord?IfoundtheLordwhere'I'didnotexist.

Wherethereisnosenseof'I',thereisliberation.Itisbondagetohavethesenseof'I'and'mine'. Identifywiththeall-pervadingsoul(atman).Youwillattainimmortality.Thisisthesecret of eternal life.

Withthegrowthandexpansionofyourinmostbeing,youattaingreaterperfectionandfulfilment of yourself,andblissistheresultthereof.Purgeyourselffromself-seekingandegoism.Escape fromspace-timelimitations.Loseallsenseofseparateness.UnitewithBrahmanortheabsolute. The practice of the presence of God will cause the ego-veil to dissolve. Divinelovewillnowmanifestandeternalblisswillflowin.TheLord'sgraceiseveruponsincere, selfless souls.

6 JULY-HOWIMPRESSIONS ARE FORMED

An experience in the sense planesinksintothe depths of the subconscious mind. There it becomes a samskara (an impression).Theimpression of an experience is formed, in the chitta, (subconscious mind), at the verymomentthatthe mind experiences it. There is no gap between the present experience and theformationofthe samskara in the subconscious mind.

One specific experience leavesonespecificsamskara and the memory of this specific experience springs from that particularsamskaraonly,which was formed out of that particular experience. When you first perceiveanorangeandtasteit, you get knowledge of an orange. A samskara is formed in the subconsciousmindatonce.Atany time this samskara can generate a memory of the object, the orangeandknowledgeoftheorange. Though the object and the act of knowing are distinguishable, yettheyareinseparable.

Samskara is also knownas'residualpotency'.When all vrittis or thoughts die away, the frame of the mind remains, withthesamskaras.Thisistermed the 'potential mind'. All samskaras co-exist in the mind. Vrittis slowlysubside,leavingtraces in the mind. These traces are samskaras. From them springs memory.

If you have yogicvision,youcanvividlynoticethe marvels that take place in the mental factory of an individual.Youcanseehowthevrittiarises in the mind-lake. You can see how it subsides. And you can seehowasamskaraisformed.You will be struck with wonder. Samskaras are like forces they eitheraidorinhibitoneanother.

The sum totalofallsamskarasisknownaskarmaashaya (receptacle of works) and this is called sanchita karma(accumulatedworks).Whenaman leaves the physical body he carries with him his astral bodyofseventeentatvas(elements) and the karmaashaya, to the mental plane. Karmaashaya isburntintotobythehighestknowledge, obtained through asamprajnata samadhi (the non-dual superconsciousstate).

7 JULY - UTILISE THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

The mental processes are not limited to the field of consciousness alone. The field of subconscious mentation is of a much greater extent than that of conscious mentation. Messages when ready, come out like a flash from the subconscious mind to the surface of the conscious mind, through the trap-door in the subconscious mind. Only ten per cent of the mental activities come into the field of consciousness. At least ninety per cent of our mental life is subconscious.

We sit and try to solve a problem. We fail. We look around. We try again and again but we fail. Suddenly the idea dawns that leads to the solution of the problem. The subconscious processes were at work. The subconscious mind is your constant companion and sincere friend. Even in sleep it works without rest. It arranges, classifies, compares, sorts the facts and figures and works out a satisfactory solution.

With the help of your subconscious mind you can change your vicious nature. By cultivating healthy, virtuous qualities you can overcome the vicious nature. If you want to overcome fear, mentally deny that you have fear. Concentrate your attention on the opposite quality, the ideal of courage. When courage is developed, fear vanishes by itself. Positive overpowers negative. You can establish new habits, new ideas, new tastes and new character in the subconscious mind, just by changing the old ones.

All actions, enjoyments and experiences leave their impressions in the subconscious mind, in the form of subtle impressions or residual potencies. Samskaras are the root cause for life and the experience of pleasure and pain. Revival of samskaras induces memory. The yogi dives deep inside and comes in direct contact with these samskaras. He directly perceives them through inner yogic vision. When you desire to remember something you have to exert. You have to go down to the depths of the subconsciousness and then pick up the right thing from a curious mixture of multifarious, irrelevant matter.

8 JULY - CHANGE YOUR HABITS

Mind is a bundle of habits. Bad habits and prejudices, hidden in one's nature, will be brought to the surface of the mind when the opportunity comes. If you change the habits you can also change your character. You sow a habit and reap a character. You sow a character and reap a destiny.

Habits originate in the conscious mind but when they become established, by constant repetition, they sink into the unconscious mind and become our 'second nature'. Habit can however be changed by a new, healthy, agreeable habit, of a stronger nature. At present you are thinking, "I am the body". Think, "I am Brahman". In the course of time you will be established in Brahmic consciousness.

Do not be a slavetooneidea.Whenever you get new, healthy ideas, the old ones must be given up. In the mindthereisaninternal fight ever going on between 'nature' and 'will', between the old, worldly habitsandthenew,spiritual habits. In the case of aspirants, the fight is between the old samskarasofthesensualworld and new, spiritual samskaras. It is a fight between the good impressions ofthepastandbadimpressions of the past. It is a fight between viveka (wisdom) and instinctivemindandindriyas(senses).

Eventually will,whichispure,strong and irresistible, is bound to succeed. There is no doubt about this. As yourreasongrowsandyou become wiser and wiser - by study, by contact with the wise and by meditation-yourmindmust be well prepared to take up new, healthy, rational ideas and eschew theold,morbidones.Mind is your tool. When emotions arise, separate them, study them, analysethem-butdonotidentify yourself with them. Master your impulses, emotions and moods. Risefromthepositionofslave to that of a spiritual king.

Just as therepetitionofathought or action leads to perfection, so also does the recurrence of the sameprocess,orthesameidea, lead to the perfection of abstraction, concentration and meditation.

Give your fullmindtoGod.Onlythen will you have realisation. Even if one ray of the mind runs outside, it isimpossibletoattainGod-consciousness. You cannot enjoy peace of mind, you cannot practise meditation,ifthereistossing of the mind. Destroy mundane desires through dispassion and surrendertotheLord.

9 JULY - MENTAL FACTORY

NowIwilltakeyoutothemostwonderfulmentalfactory.Itisveryclose to you; it is a wonder of wonders.Evenarankmaterialist,ifheisverysincere,willbeturnedinto a perfect theist, instantly, if hecloseshiseyesforamomentandseriouslyreflectsontheworking of this marvellous factory. TheKenaUpanishadopenswiththefollowinglines:"Whoisthedirector of this mind? Who gives lightandpowertothismind?"Itgoeson"Brahmanisthemindofminds, the prana (life) of pranas, the eye of eyes, the ear of ears."

Whataboldphilosophy.Atonceitraisesmantoanunerringsolutionfor all the different problems of life.Thefourmahavakyas(greatutterances):"Prajnanambrahma (consciousness is the absolute);ahambrahmaasmi(Iamtheabsolute);tattwamasi(thatthou art); ayam atma brahma (the selfistheabsolute);infusepowerandjoyintotheheartsofallhearers. They produce drastic changesinyourlife.Thenyouwilllaughatthevainpomp,theempty glory and the artificial and miserable life of a rich man.

The eyesandtheearsarethegate-keepersofthismentalfactory-they are the 'way in' and mouth is the 'wayout'.Eyesandearsbringinsidethementalfactorymatters for manufacture. Light and sound vibrationsarebroughtinsidethroughthesetwoavenues.First of all they are made into 'percepts'bythemind.Theyarethenpresentedtotheintellect.The intellect converts these 'percepts'into'concepts'orideas.Theseideasareexpressedbytheoutside gatekeeper, the organ of speech.

Theexternalphysicaleyesandearsaremereinstruments.Butthereal visual and auditory centres areinthebrainandintheastralbody-thesearetherealsenses.Understand this point well. The intellectreceivesthesematerialsfromthemindandpresentsthemto the purusha or atman (the self),who isbehindthe screen.

Themindistheheadclerkofthismentalfactory.Hehastenclerks,the five jnana indriyas (senses) to bringnewsfromthefactsoutside.Thefactsareplacedbythemind before the intellect, who placesthembeforethepurusha(innerself).Amessagecomesback from the purusha to the buddhi(intellect).Buddhidecidesanddetermines,andthengivesthe answer back to the mind, for execution.Thefivekarmaindriyas(organsofspeech,hands,feet, genitals and anus) execute the orderofthemindwhoistheirmaster.

10 JULY - THE INNER INSTRUMENT

Antahkarana(theinnerinstrument) is a broad term which includes mind, intellect, memory and egoism(ahamkara).Theoneantahkarana assumes different names, just as the same man assumesthenameofjudgewhen he works as a judge in the law courts, or president when he servesinasocietyorassociation, and store-keeper when he is in charge of the stores.

Whenyouwalkthroughamango garden, the will and doubt are done by the mind - it thinks whetherthemangoisgoodornot. The intellect comes to its aid; it determines that the mango is 'good'.Thenthechitta(mind-stuff) finds out how to ,get hold of some of the mangoes from the gardener.Ahamkaraself-arrogates. It demands the mango at any price. The mind executes this orderbypassingittothefeet(karma indriya) to take the man to the gardener. Ahamkara buys themangoandeatsit.Theimpressions of the mango remain in the mind and the vasana (tendency)isformedinthemind. The thought of enjoyment comes to the mind later on. And this,throughmemory(intheform of a subtle vasana) produces thought (sankalpa) and troubles themanagainandagain,toenjoy the mango.

Thiscycle:desire,thought,action, goes on from eternity to eternity. This brings bondage to man. Whenthevasanaisrepeatedseveral times it becomes a strong passion. Then the man is a slave of thepassionandindriyas(senses). A strong sense-hankering is called a trishna. The difference betweendesireandvasanaisthat the vasana is subtle and hidden in the subconscious mind, whereasthedesireisgross.The pleasure derived from the enjoyment of the object brings attachmentinthismind.Attachment is moha. The man who is attached to objects, who is full of sense-vasanas,istiedtothoseobjects. Escape becomes nearly impossible for him. Escape is possible onlybydestroyingthese knots, by knowledge of the witness, the director of this mental factory, whohaskeptupthisshow inside.

If you canclairvoyantlyvisualise the inner working of this mental factory you will be dumb-founded.Wakeupfromthislong slumber of ignorance. Purify, meditate and attain wisdom And roam abouthappily.---SosaysSivananda

11 JULY - MORE ON THE INNER INSTRUMENT

If you canclairvoyantlyvisualisetheinnerworkingofthismentalfactoryyouwillseethat,it is like a bigtelephoneexchange,themessagescomefromdiversehousesandfirmsintothecentral exchange.Theoperatorplugs,connectsanddisconnectsthevariousswitches.Sotoo,themind plugs, connectsanddisconnects.Whenyouwanttoseesomethingthemindputsaplugintothe other foursenses(centresofhearing,smelling,tasteandfeeling).Whenyouwanttohear something, the mind plugs into the other four centres.

The mindfunctionsatanunimaginablespeed.Therearenumberlesspigeon-holesinthe subconsciousmindwherevarioussortsofthingsarerecordedinperfectorder.Theretheyare classified,grouped,labelledwithaccurateprecision.Oneimpressionrisesupasathought-wave and comestothesurfaceofthemind.Itticklesthejiva(individual)intoaction.Youcanalsosee variouscoloursinthoughts-spiritualorholythoughtsaretingedwithbeautifulyellowcolour. If there isthoughtofanger,darkredarrowsshootoutfromthemind.Thereisperfectorderinthe cosmos-theworkingissmoothandharmoniousbecausethereistheantaryami(innercontroller) behindit,directingandguiding.Inthemerepresenceoftheinnerruler,theindwelling, interpenetrating presence, the mind and other inner faculties work without any friction.

There aredifferentregionsforsentiments,emotions,instincts,impulses.Therearehighlandsand lowlandsinthemind.Thereisthespiritualplaneandtherearetheplanesoftheinstinctivemind and theintellect.Ontheonesidethewillstepsintoexecuteacertainstrongdesireofthemind. The otherfaculties,suchasmemoryandthepowerofjudgementandreflectionstandbehind, in a disciplinedarray,tohelptheirmaster,thewill.Afterthewillhasexecutedtheorder,imagination comes forward and speculates. Memory helps imagination.

Thenthethreegunas(qualitiesofnature),thevariousmodes,andthethirteenevilvrittis(lust, anger,etc.),showtheirfacesindifferentcolours.Theycometothescene,dotheirworkandthen retireforarest.Wordscannotdescribehowthrillingthisisceneis.Developthisclairvoyantastral sight through purification and concentration.

Donotforgettheinnerrulerwhoisawakeevenwhenthementalfactoryisclosedddown temporarily.Purifythemind.Practiseconcentration.Developthepowerofthemind.Eventually you will merge with him.

12 JULY - SUBTLE DESIRES

The summum bonumofexistenceistheattainmentofknowledgeofthe self, the realisation of the one homogeneousself.Theknowledgeoftheselfcanonlydawnwhen there is extinction of all the vasanas.Vasanasaresubtledesires;theyaregrossinnature.Some philosophers define vasanas as tendenciesorinclinations.Otherssaytheyareblindclinging to sensual objects, through intenselongingorcraving,withoutdeliberationorthinking.

There are twokindsofvasanas-thepureandtheimpure.Purevasanasliberate one from rebirth. Impure vasanascausethemindtofluctuate,producingagitationinthe mind and affinity for objects. If youareledbypurevasanas,youwillsoonattaintheimmortal seat of ineffable splendour. Thevasanasgeneratedbyyouinpastliveswillclingtoyouinfuture births. But if pure vasanas clingtoyou,youwilleasilyattainknowledgeoftheself,andthrough this you will attain liberation. Iftheimpurevasanasclingtoyou,youwillexperiencepainand sorrow; you will get rebirth in thisworld,againandagain.

The tree-mindhastwoseeds-oneisvasanaandtheotheristhefluctuation of prana (life). The seeds produceabigtreeandthetreeagainproducesseeds.Soalsothevibration of prana arises through vasanaandthevasanaoperatesthroughthemovementofprana. If either perishes, both soon perish.

Egoismisthefirstasuric(demoniac)sonofavidya(ignorance).Egoismhas two asuric daughters - raga andvasana.Thereisanintimateconnectionbetweenvasanaandraga. Raga is attachment. Mamata(mine-ness)isduetoraga.Ifyouwanttokillragaandvasana, you must annihilate egoism.Ifyouwanttokillegoismyoumustfirstkillavidya.Destroyavidya first - raga and vasana will diebythemselves.

Mind isthecauseforbondageandfreedom.Amindfilledwithimpurevasanas leads to bondage, whereasaminddestituteofvasanastendstofreedom.Whenmind is no-mind (through destructionofvasanas),thenyoubecomemindless.Whenyoubecomemindless, intuition dawns and youareendowedwiththeeyeofwisdom.Youwillenjoyindescribable peace.

13JULY-WORLD OF OPPOSITES

One thing,whichissweetandpleasanttoyou at one moment, produces the very reverse sensationinanothermoment.Whohasnotexperienced this, in this world of opposites? Objects when longedforarepleasantbutarebitterifnot longed for. Hence vasanas (tendencies) are the cause ofsensualpleasures.Pleasureswillstop when you get satisfaction in them but if vasanas cease, themindwillperishandallelsewillbedestroyed. Therefore annihilate these vasanas, the enemiesofatma-jnana(self-knowledge)andimmortality.

The mindclingstosensualobjects.Ifthevasanas perish, the mind ceases thinking of objects and we attainthestateofthoughtlessness.You will have a balanced mind despite adverse circumstancesandmanyobstacles.Vasanasperish through dispassion, discrimination, control of the senses,enquiryof,"WhoamI?"andmeditation.

The impurevasanasperishistandresist.They lurk in the corners of the mind in a mysterious manner. Theyplaytricksonyou.Theycanchange their colours like a chameleon. Under pressure of yogic practicestheygetsuppressedforsome time but if you are not regular in your meditation, if vairagya (dispassion)wanes,theywillattack with redoubled force. You must have a sharp intellect to detecttheirpresence.Vasanashave arisen through enjoyment in many thousands of lives. They are verypotent.Theyonlyperish through protracted spiritual practices - japa (repetition of God'sname),kirtan(chanting), meditation, self-enquiry, discrimination, sama (control of mind),dama(controlofsenses),pratyahara (withdrawal of the mind) and pranayama (yoga breathing).

You havetotransmutetheimpurevasanasinto pure ones, through constant effort. Change the currentofimpurevasanasandallowthemtorun in the channel of pure vasanas. But pure vasanas are alsofetters,goldenfetters.Youhavetodestroy the impure vasanas with the help of pure vasanas-thenyouhavetoabandonthesepure ones also. Desire for liberation (moksha vasana) also mustdieeventually.Thenonlyyoubecome that.

Separateyourselffromtheobjects.Intheabsence of objects the 'I' does not exist; and these objects donotexistintheabsenceof'I'.Have the strong conviction that 'I' does not belong to the objects,thattheobjectsdonotbelongto the 'I'. Identify yourself with the infinite 'I' (the satchidanandaBrahman)-andabandontheburden of the physical body. Become a videha mukta (liberated andbodiless)-allburdenswillperish now.

14 JULY - MY TASK IS COMPLETE

My purpose is achieved. The entire circle of birth and death is over. I have realised the perfect bliss of the atman. I have known myself to be Brahman. I am free. I am perfect. I am independent. I enjoy bliss. I enjoy the bliss of the immortal soul.

I am brimful of perennial joy. A self-effulgent light burns in my heart. I have broken all illusory relationships. Now there is no husband, no wife. Now there is no cousin and no grandfather. It is all one homogeneous essence of bliss only. Now my task is complete.

I am free from doubt. I am free from delusion. Why should I study the scriptures? I rest in my own essential nature. Now, where is the necessity for meditation? I act like any other human being. I bathe, I sleep, I sing, I answer the calls of nature, I work, I write, I walk, I eat and I talk. And yet, I do not perform any action at all.

I am the witness of all these processes. I am identical with Brahman. These acts are not obstructions to me. All these dealings are perfectly harmless. I am not susceptible to vikshepa (the disturbance of the equilibrium of the mind).

Where is the necessity for samadhi for me? Vikshepa and samadhi are functions of the mind only. I have obliterated the mind. I am continuously experiencing the satisfaction which results from samadhi.

Let people have any opinion of me. Let them glorify me. Let them vilify me. It matters little. "Sivoham. Sivoham. Sivoham. Sivah Kevaloham."

I have risen above ignorance. I have risen above my knowledge of this seeming universe. It is not only escape from misery and grief. I enjoy the joy eternal, the joy unspeakable, the joy supreme, the joy unbounded.

What is this joy that I feel? Who shall measure it? I know nothing but joy limitless and unbounded.

15 JULY - GUIDE TO SADHAKAS

The first thing a spiritual aspirant has to acquire is mastery over the mind. Like a blind man - look at the objects. Like a deaf man - hear sounds. Do not allow the sense experiences to penetrate within. The mind gets fattened on account of its being fed by sense objects. Restrain the senses by the process of pratyahara (abstraction).

Why should you struggle to curb the mind? Its power is far greater than any other power, but it will become your slave if you surrender to the Lord and allow his divine power to work through you. The control of prana (life force) should be the natural and unfailing duty of all spiritually minded persons. It is the control of prana which paves the way for the non-cogitation of all the externals and the conquest of death.

Firmness of practice in the stainless non-dual principle, control of prana and the subjugation of the mind - these three are the paths to realise the meaning of moksha. Out of these three, one should be mastered thoroughly. Then the effects of all three will be obtained as all three are inseparably related to one another.

If the mind and prana cease to exist then thoughts will cease to arise - both of these are one only like the flower and its fragrance, or a seed and the oil in it. Prana and mind stand to one another in the relationship of supporter and supported. If either of them is slain then the other also will cease to exist. The destruction of both will confer moksha.

Spiritual life begins with repentance. Spiritual life begins with aspiration. Genuine aspiration is the pre-condition of success in leading a spiritual life. Aspiration is indeed the fruit of good actions of the past. Guard your spiritual aspirations very carefully. Increase them through viveka (wisdom), sadvichara (pure enquiry) and satsanga (holy company).

Devotion to God and guru, practice of discipline, regular meditation - these will quickly lead to self-realisation. Selfless work is for the purification of the mind. Self-realisation is brought about by discrimination, dispassion, determination and meditation. He who is faithful to truth and who diligently practises meditation, turning inwards in meditation, is put upon the ultimate path which leads to self-realisation.

16 JULY - NIRODHA

Mind andbreatharelikemilkandwater.Rajayogaiscontrolofthemind.Hewhowantsto become aperfectyogiandwantstoexperiencewonderfulsamadhi(superconsciousstate),must control mindandbreath.Hemustcontinuouslypractiseyogaandobservetherules.Hemust thoroughly overcome the five tatvas (elements).

Restraintofthemind(nirodha)leadstojnana.Nirodhaistheculminationofyogaandsankhya (two pathstoliberation).Itisnirodhawhichunderliesallsadhana(spiritualpractice).Restraintof the mindistheessenceofallworship.Thisisjnana(wisdom)anddhyana(meditation).The highestisattainedbytherestraintofthemind.Themindshouldbecompletelyrestrainedfrom objects until it attains dissolution in the heart.

AtmanorBrahmanisyourimmortalself.Itistheonlyblazingreality.OnlyifyouknowthisAtman canyouattainperfection.Perfectioncanbeyoursinthisverylife.Atmanistoberecognisedas your innermost being, through samadhi.

If youknowtheatman,whichistheultimatereality,whichisperfection,thenonlyyourlife becomesusefulandarealexistence.Theknoweroftheatman,theinnerperfection,crossesall sorrows and becomes free. If you do not know this atman then there is great loss for you.

Samadhiisnotamereemotionalenthusiasmoranexhilarationoffeeling,itisthedirect,unique, intuitiveexperienceoftruthorabsoluteconsciousnessortheultimatereality.Itisbeyondall feeling,throbbingandthrill.Theaspirantrestsinhiscentrenow-thegoalofhissearch-and realises the absolute freedom, independence and perfection.

The aspirantshouldhaveaburningdesiretofreehimselffromthefireofsamsara(worldlylife). Then only hewillbeabletoenterintodeepmeditationandsamadhi.Themindbecomesthat very Brahmanwhenitispurifiedandbroughtintothesamadhistate.Insamadhithereisno perception ofduality,thecauseoffear.Avidya(ignorance)isentirelyabsentinthisstate.
To attain supremebliss,youmusthavepatience,perseverance,diligence,serenity,purity,one-pointed mind andburningaspiration.Hewhodoesnotstriveforrealisationlivesinvain-though he is a man in appearance,heisinfactabeast.

17 JULY - TRUE RENUNCIATION

The mind is the all in all. Its mastery leads to the renunciation of all. True renunciation is in the abnegation of the mind. It consists in renouncing all desires and egoism, not world existence. Through such mental abnegation you will be able to free yourself from pain. Then will come immortality in life - the enjoyment of the infinite delight of existence free from ego, founded on the oneness of all in Brahman.

Sanyasa (renunciation) is a mentalstateonly.Itisgerua(orcolouring)oftheheartandnotofthe cloth alone. He is a sanyasi whoisfreefrompassionandegoism,whopossessesallthesatvic qualities, even though he lives withthefamilyandintheworld.Ifyouhaveastainlessmindyou are a sanyasi (a renunciate), whetheryouliveinaforestorinacity,whetheryouwearwhitecloth or an orange coloured robe, whetheryoushaveyourheadorkeepalongtuftofhair.

Shave the mind. This consistsofgettingridofallattachment,passion,egoism,infatuation,lust, greed, anger, etc. Vedanta doesnotwantyoutorenouncetheworld;itwantsyoutochangeyour mental attitude. It wants youtogiveupthisillusoryfeelingof'I-ness'and'mine-ness'.

Mind is a mass of objectifieddesires.Desireinthemindtoeat,hasmanifestedasthetongue,the teeth and the stomach.Desireinthemindtowalkhasmanifestedaslegsandfeet.Controlthe mind and you controlthedesires.Eyescanonlysee.Earscanonlyhear.Tonguecanonlytaste. Nose can only smell.Skincanonlytouch.Thefivesensesareblendedinthemindandthemind directly sees, hears,smells,tastesandfeels.Itdoesthisquiteindependentofthesenses.

Understand clearlytheaimofyourlife.Chalkoutthelineofworkthatiscongenialtoyouraim. Then you shouldworkhardtorealisethatideal.Haveyouridealeverbeforeyouandtry,every second, to live uptoit.

Develop a strongdesiretoremovecarelessnessandforgetfulnessfromyourcharacter.Have confidence in yourownpowersandfaculties.Keepyourmentalpoiseintheworld,without consideration offailure,withoutconsiderationofgainorloss,pleasureorpain.

Have the mind alwaysrootedinGod,amidstalltheactivitiesoflife.

18 JULY - FASTING OF THE HEART

Form thehabitofdeepintrospection.Goodaspirantswhoenterintodeepmeditation also march forwardinsleep.Takingfoodimmoderatelyoratthewrongtimewillaffectyour system and rendermeditationdifficult.Leadalifeofself-restraintandbackitupwithmeditation, japa (repetitionofGod'sname),pranayama(yogabreathing)andasanas(postures). Fasting is beneficial.Youcanmeditatewellandseriouslywhilefasting.Themostsignificant fast is the fast of the heart-thatis,renunciationofdesires.

The mindmayfallintoastateofinactivityandtheaspirantthinkshehasreached the goal. This is a sadmistake.Divestyourselfofanger,greedandattachmenttosensualobjects and their enjoyments.Befreefrom'love'and'hate'ofothers.Divestyourselffromallaffinities for objects. Follow proper diet, easy posture, purity of mind and body.

If thestepsarenotsteadyonthepath,domorejapa,intensifyyourvairagya(dispassion), sit in oneplaceandmeditate.Serve.HaveunshakablefaithintheLord.ClingtotheLord's divine name. SurrendertothedivineLord.Praytohimsincerely.Themindwillbepowerless.Hand over charge ofyourbodytotheLordandceasetothinkofit.TheLordiseverywhere.Hecontrols everything. He will protect you from all danger.

RelyontheLordalone.Ifyouputintopractiseonehundredthofwhatlsaytoyou, you will surely attain God-realisation now and here.

A greatemperorpurchasedahorsefortenthousandrupees.Thehorsewasrestless and no one was abletorideit.ThenhissonSikandarsaid,"Belovedfather,Icanridethishorse”. He sat on the horseandrodeitinthedirectionofthesun.Thehorsegalloped.Theemperor was quite astonished.Hesaid,"OSikandar:Howdidyoumanagetoridethishorse?"Sikandar replied, "The horse wasafraidofhisownshadowsoImadehimruntowardsthesun”.Such is the restless horse-mindalso.Ifyouturnittowardsatman(self)itwillbepeaceful.Ifyouturn it towards maya (delusion) it will jump and dance.

9 JULY - TREACHEROUS MIND

Mind is very treacherous. It will hurl you down into the abyss of ignorance. It will say: "Pitva pitva punar pitva punar janma na vidyate". (Drink, drink again, there is no rebirth). It will say: "Give up sadhana (spiritual practice), you will not gain anything. There is no bliss beyond the senses. The world is real, there is nothing like sensual pleasure, enjoy it to your heart's content."

Hear not this voice of the mind. Swim against the mind-current. Mind is your bitter enemy. Disconnect your self from the mind - stand as its silent witness. Do not become one with the mind and the senses. Practise introspection and self-analysis. Thus will the mind gradually be tamed. It will become your obedient servant.

Sensual pleasures are nectar in the beginning but they are venom in the end. Here is a way to thin out the mind, a way to control it. If the mind says, "Eat eggs and meat", eat only spinach, fruits and milk. If the mind says, "Read novels and newspapers", read only the Gita, the Upanishads and practise karma yoga. If the mind says, "Gamble; practise vigil and do kirtan the whole night.

O truant mind: O mischievous imp! I am tired of giving you admonitions. You are like the shameless son-in-law who sits idly in the house of his father-in-law, eating and drinking, and bearing all the rebukes and broom beatings it is difficult to control the mind without the grace of the Lord. The prompter of thoughts alone can subjugate this wild mind. My prostrations and adorations to the prompter!

Listen O mind, to this piece of advice. Sink not in the mire of samsara (worldly life), in the perilous ocean of births and deaths. Mix thou not in mundane affairs. Eat not the fruits of pain and sorrow. Take not birth again and again. Wither not thyself in wicked deeds. Is not eternal bliss thy quest? Commune with the Lord of bliss now. Forget the body and its connections and rest peacefully in blissful joy. Abide in thy supreme abode. Now there will be an end of birth.

Desire not name, fame, prestige, position, title, honour, rank. Care not, O mind, for earthly affection, love and kind words,respect, nice clothes and dainty dishes, the company of damsels and their talk. Remain steadfast. Gaze on the Lord dwelling in the cave of thy heart - He who is thy refuge, thy solace, sourceand centre, the witness and the abode, the Lord and dissolution.

20 JULY - CURE FOR MENTAL DEFECTS

There arethreedefectsofthemind.Theyare;impurity,tossingofthemind,andtheveilof ignorance. The mind is tossed about among objects of love and hatred like a light feather in a stormy wind.Itwhirlsfarandwideamongsensualobjects,farawayfromtheassociationofthe wise. It islikeastrollingcitydog.Thisbanefulmindwhirlsatthesightofimmensewealthandit follows itsmate,desire,andeverpreysuponignorantworldlingsasitwouldonacarcass.

The mindischaracterisedbyexcessivefluctuation.Itisfluctuatingandconfused.Itrejoicesin vain. Itisintoxicatedwithegoism.Throughthisfluctuationthemindbecomesapreytofear. Remove these three doshas (defects).

To do thisyoushouldstudythemind.Analysethemind.Purifythemind.Dissolvethemindin God, byconstantandintensethinkingaboutGod.Practisethesadhana(endeavour)of destruction of the mind. Rise above deceptions of the mind. Rise above the temptations of the mind. Thisisyourduty.Youarebornforthisonly.Allotherdutiesareself-imposed,self-created through ignorance.

Mind is made pure through true, pure and virtuous actions, by constant association with the wise. Mantra, repeated with the right feeling, produces a wonderful effect on the mind. Right thinking, noble emotions, prayers, regular and strenuous meditation are the means to improve the mind.

As aresultofpurificationofthemind,themindbecomesmoresensitive.Itiseasilydisturbedby sound or shock. It feels any pressure acutely. The aspirant must be sensitive and yet have the body and nerves completely under his control. He must get over this sensitivity.

O mind,youcannotbemyfriendnow-Iknowyourworthandnature.TillnowIwasdeludedby your tricks.Butnowwemoveindiametricallyoppositepoles.Youwantfleetingsensualpleasure from objects.Iwantimmortalblissofthesoulinside.Youareeverrestlessandworried.Iam peaceful andtranquil.Youarefullofpassion,fearandattachment.Iamdispassionate,fearless and unattached.Youwantwoman,wealth,property.Iamfullofrenunciation.Wecannotagree at all. Thereforeleavemequicklyandquietly.Goodbye,friend.

21 JULY - DISCIPLINE OF THE MIND

You must have apuremindifyouwanttorealisetheself.Unlessthemindisfreeanditcastsaway all desires, cravings,worries,delusion,pride,lust,attachment,likesanddislikes,itcannotenter into the domainofsupremepeaceandunalloyedfelicity,theimmortalabode. A glutton orasensualist,adullardoralazyman,cannotpractisemeditation.Hewhohas controlled thetongueandotherorgans,whohasanacuteacumen,whoeats,drinksandsleeps in moderation,whohasdestroyedselfishness,lust,greedandanger,canpractisemeditationand attain successinsamadhi(superconsciousness).

You cannot enjoypeaceofmind,youcannotpractisemeditationifthereisvikshepainyourmind. Vikshepa is tossingofmind.Vikshepaisrajas(passion);vikshepaanddesiresco-existinthemind. If you really wanttodestroyvikshepa,youmustdestroyallmundanecravingsthroughdispassion and self-surrendertotheLord.

If youapplyfiretogreenwood,itwillnotburn;ifyouapplyfiretoapieceofdriedwood,itwill at oncecatchfireandburn.Evenso,thosewhohavenotpurifiedtheirmindswillnotbeableto startthefireofmeditation.Theywillbesleepingordreamingbuildingcastlesintheair-when they sit for meditation.

Butthosewhohaveremovedtheimpuritiesofthemindbyjapa(repetitionofGod'sname), service,charity,pranayama(yogabreathing)etc.,willenterintodeepmeditationassoonasthey sit for meditation. The pure ripe mind will at once burn with the fire of meditation.

Clarifyyourideaagainandagain.Thinkclearly.Havedeepconcentrationandrightthinking. Introspectinsolitude.Purifyyourthoughts.Stillthethoughts.Silencethebubblingmind.Allow one thought-waveonlytorisefromthemindandsettledowncalmly.Thenallowanotherthought to enter.Driveoffallextraneousthoughtsthathavenothingtodowiththesubjectmatteron hand. Anefficientcontroloverthoughts,throughlongpractice,isagreathelpinmeditation.

Watch everythoughtverycarefully.Shutoutalluselessthoughtsfromthemind.Yourlifemust tally with yourmeditation.Youkeepupyourmeditationduringworkalso.Donotgivenew strength to evilthoughtsbyconstantlythinking.Restrainthem.Substitutesublimethoughts.

22 JULY - TRAINING OF THE MIND

If a pebbleinourshoetormentsus,weexpelit.Oncethematterisunderstood,itisjustaseasy to expelanintrudingandobnoxiousthoughtfromthemind.Thoughtsarethesourcesofall actions-theyarerealkarma,realaction.If,rightatthebeginning,youcanrootoutallevil thoughts, you will not do any evil actions. You will be free from misery and anxiety.

Watch thethoughtswithvigilance.Oncethetossingofthemindvanishes,themindwillbevery calm andyouwillgetgoodmeditation.Freeyourselffromtheclutchesofthemind,andliberation will comebyitself.Thosewhohaveevenalittlecontrolovertheirthoughtsandspeechwillhave a calm, serene,beautifulface,asweetvoiceandbrilliant,lustrouseyes.

Conserve allmentalenergy.Useitforspiritualpurposes.Donotstoreuselessinformationinyour brain. Learntounmindthemind.Thenonlyyoucanfillthemindwithdivinethoughts.Asallthe dissipated mentalraysarecollectedyouwillgainnewmentalstrength.Uselessthoughtsimpede your spiritualgrowth;obnoxiousthoughtsarestumblingblockstospiritualadvancement.

In untrainedpersonsfourorfivekindsofthoughtsoccupythemindatonetime.Thesemaybe thoughtsofthehousehold,ofbusiness,oftheoffice,ofthebodyandsoon.Ifyouwatchcarefully you willseethatmanythoughtsareinconsistentandthatthemindwandersaimlessly.

Entertainonlythoughtsthatareusefulandhelpful.Thesearethesteppingstonestoallspiritual progress.Everythoughtmustbeofaconstructivenature;itmustbepositiveanddefinite.Mental images mustbewell-defined.Everythoughtmustbringpeaceandcomforttoothersandnever bring painorunhappiness.Then,youareablessedsoulonearth.

Always watchyourmind.Bevigilant.Bealert.Donotallowwavesofirritability,jealousy,anger, hatred and lusttoariseinthemind.Thesearetheenemiesofmeditation,peaceandwisdom. Suppress thematoncebyentertainingsublimethoughts.Evilthoughtswhichhavealreadyarisen may be destroyedbyoriginatingandmaintaininggoodthoughts,byrepeatinganymantra,by doing any goodactions,byabstractingthemindandbyenquiring,"WhoamI?"orbywill-force.

23 JULY - CONSEQUENCES OF ANGER

A terrible fit of anger shatters the physical nervous system. It produces a lasting impression on the inner astral body. Although the effects of a fit of anger may seem to subside in a short time, the vibration or wave, continues to exist for days in the astral body. A slight unpleasant feeling that lasts in the mind for five minutes, may produce a deep inflammation of the astral body. It may take several weeks or months even for this ulcer to heal.

Now, have you realised the disastrous consequences of anger? Do not be victims of anger. Control it by love, mercy, sympathy, vichara (enquiry) and consideration for others. Even slight annoyance, or irritability, affects the mind and the astral body.

Aspirants should not allow these vrittis (thought-waves) to manifest in the mind-lake, as they may burst out as big waves of anger at any moment, if you are careless or weak. There should not be the least disturbance in the mind-lake it should be perfectly calm and serene. Then only you will find meditation possible.

It is difficult to control anger. Anger is a manifestation of shakti (energy). At first, try to reduce its force. and its frequency of duration. Endeavour to attenuate or thin out this formidable modification of the mind.

Do not allow this modification to assume the form of a big wave on the surface of the conscious mind. Nip it in the bud when it is in the form of irritability. Divert the mind. Entertain divine thoughts. Do vigorous japa (repetition of God's name) and kirtan (chanting). Repeat some prayers or slokas (verses) from the scriptures.

Develop the opposite, divine qualities. Develop patience, love, forgiveness - anger will die by itself, gradually. Blessed are those high-souled people who can control their anger by pure, strong will and intellect.

Be serene. Serenity is like arock. Waves may dash on it but they cannot affect it. Waves of irritation may break on this rock of serenity but they cannot affect it. Meditate daily on the ever-tranquil atman (self). You willattain this sublime virtue of serenity gradually.

24 JULY - DEPRESSION AND DEVOTION

Every aspirant in the spiritual path becomes a victim to the mood of depression in the beginning. You have to overcome this mood through discrimination, reflection, singing God's name, prayer, etc. This mood is like a passing cloud. It will pass off if you are vigilant. Do not mistake emotion for devotion.

Whenever you get into a mood of depression, sing God's name vigorously; sitting alone in your room, sing with a melting heart. You may sing silently if you wish. This is an easy way to drive away this undesirable mood.

Try to control all wild outbursts of weeping. This is a weakness, a negative state. But do allow the pearl drops of divine love or ecstasy to trickle down your face occasionally, when you are in a profoundly prayerful or meditative mood.

Shed the tears of pure, divine love when you are alone, when you are in communion with the Lord. Do not weep in the presence of others. The rare pearl-drops of divine love are the outcome of the melting of the heart by the fire of devotion and the fire of painful separation from the Lord.

Sometimes a man feigns to be a devotee. He sheds false tears to make his neighbours think he is a great devotee. On account of sympathetic action, his neighbours also begin to weep - but there will not be one iota of devotion in their hearts.

Devotion is a very rare gift from God. Weeping itself is not a criterion by which to judge the devotional nature of a man or a woman. Do not mistake the crocodile tears of a hypocrite bhakta (devotee) for the genuine pearl drops of divine love which inspire and elevate bystanders. One may not weep outwardly and yet he may be a genuine, silent devotee.

Identify yourself with the emotionless state or Brahman, and rest peacefully for ever.

Satvic (peaceful) emotion is quiet. Rajasic (passionate) emotion is terrible. Tamasic (dull) emotion is confused. Rajasic and tamasic emotions are of a turbid nature and therefore cannot receive a reflection of the blissful nature of atman. Rajasic and tamasic emotions present a reflection of intelligence but not of bliss. Satvic emotions present a reflection of both blissfulness and intelligence.

25 JULY - BRAVE ALL TRIALS

Trials, difficulties, troublesandsufferingsarenecessaryforyourpurificationandtostrengthen your will and powerofendurance.Facethembravelyandcomeouttriumphantly.Presson.Strive on with all your will;onlythenisthegraceofGodbestowed.

God helps those whohelpthemselves.Ifbadthoughtsenteryourmind,simplyignorethem.Offer a prayer to the Lordandsubstitutedivinethoughtsbystudyingthesacredbooks.Thespiritual fire should be generateddayafterday.Holdfasttotheideal.Keeptheflameofaspirationever bright. Scorn mundanedelightsandstrife.

Dedicate your lifetoGod.Meditate.Scalethespirit'ssteepestheightandreachthepeakof eternal wisdom andblissdivine.Nothingisabletodauntthefirmandresoluteaspirantorturn him from a coursewhichheconsiderstoberight,orwhichheholdstobehisduty.

Be brave andcourageous.Youmustpasswithonebreathoverthemountainofdifficulties.The atman cannotbeattainedbyalifeofweaknessanderror.Youhaveinfinitestrengthwithinyou. Be strong. Lookwithin.Meditate.Tapthesource.Haveanindomitablewill,backedbyanabiding faith. You areboundtosucceedineverything.

God is the lightoflights.Heisknowledge.Heistheknower.Godisthesamefromagetoage.God never changes;heisageless.Godhasnoopposite.

God is truth,beauty,goodness.Godhasnoreligion;Heisthesourceofallreligion.Godisone.

God is peace.Godisuniversalharmony.Godisloveandlaw.Asalampcannotburnwithoutoil, so man cannotlivewithoutGod.

Creation revealsthatGodisdharma(righteousness).Godisthebestowerofgracewhichis boundless and inexhaustible.

26JULY-ORDER IN YAMA AND NIYAMA

There is a deliberateorderinthefiveparts or limbs of yama (self-control). Ahimsa (non-violence) comes first, becausemanmustremovehis brutal nature first. He must become non-violent; he must develop cosmiclove.Onlythendoes he become fit for the practice of yoga. Then comes satyam or truthfulness.Becausethewhole phenomenon of maya (illusion) is asat or unreal, the aspirant shouldbeawareofthisfact.He should ever remember the truth or Brahman. Then comes asteyaornon-stealing.Becausehe must develop moral consciousness, he must know right from wrong,righteousnessfromunrighteousness; and he must know that all are one. Brahmacharyaisadivineattribute.Theaspirant is now becoming a superman by the practice of brahmacharyaorcelibacy.Thefifthisaparigraha. The yogic student is free now from desires, cravings,unnecessarywants,luxuries,desire to possess and enjoy. He has a very expanded heart. Yama is"takingofvow".Niyamais"religious observance".

Yama isnotapolicyorcompanymanners or courtesy, it is sticking to ideals and principles; it is developmentofdivinetraitsthatwilltransform human nature into divine nature; it annihilates desires,cravings,evilqualities;iteradicates brutal instinct and brutal nature; it removes harshness,violence,crueltyandcovetousness; it fills the heart with cosmic love, kindness, mercy, goodness,purityanddivinelight.Itisthe foundation of divine life or yoga, on which the super-structureofsamadhiisbuilt.Itisthe corner-stone of yoga, on which the edifice of superconsciousness is built.

Niyama is canon orreligiousobservance. It consists of five limbs; namely, shaucha, santosha, tapas, svadhyaya andIshvarapranidhana. Saucha is purity, internal and external. Santosha is contentment. Tapasisausterityorcontrol of senses or meditation. Svadhyaya is study of scriptures. It meansalsochantingofmantra (name of God) or enquiry. Ishvara pranidhana is self-surrender to the Lord.Itisconsecrationof one's work as an offering to the Lord.

There is an intimaterelationbetweenyama and niyama. Niyama safeguards yama. If one has internal purity onecangetestablishedin brahmacharya. If you have contentment, you will not steal or hurt othersortelllies.Itwillbeeasy for you to practise aparigraha.

27 JULY - BLESSING OF AHIMSA

Ahimsa (non-violence)isoneoftheforemostvowsofgoodlife.Itisasupremedutyofman - ahimsa paramodharmah-thusscripturedeclares.Intheregenerationanddivinisationofman, the first stepistoeliminatethebeastlynature.Thepredominanttraitinbeastsiscruelty; therefore wisesagesprescribedahimsa.Thisisamosteffectivemaster-methodtocounteractand eradicate completelythebrutal,cruelnatureinman.Oearnestaspirant:Ponderthegreat significance,andimmenseimportance,valueandblessingsofahimsaandstartitspracticenow - this moment. Ahimsaisnotmerelynon-killingassomethink.Ahimsaisperfectharmlessnessandpositivelove also. Itistoabstainevenfromtheslightestthoughtofharmtoanylivingcreature-mentally, verbally,orbydeed.Thereisnoexcusenorexceptiontotheaboverule.Harshwordstobeggars, servantsorinferiorsishimsa(cruelty).Tofailtorelievepainortroubleinanotherisnegative himsa.Toapproveofanother'sharshactionsisagainstahimsa.Avoidstrictlyallformsof harshness,directorindirect,positiveornegative,immediateordelayed.Practiseahimsainits purest form, O Saumya'. and become divine. Ahimsa and divinity are one.

Ahimsaisaweaponofthestrong.Itcannotbepractisedbyweaklings.Ahimsaissupremelove. He whoembracesahimsaembracesall,lovesall.Tobeginwith,stopallphysicalviolence,stop speakingvulgarandharshwords.Thenattacktheminddirectly.Therewillbeinneragitation.You may thinkofdoingviolence.Checkthisthought-wavethroughprayer,worship,meditation, enquiry,pranayama(yogabreathing),satvic(pure)food,andstudyofsacredbooks.Generate again andagaincurrentsoflovebycultivatingthefeelingthat'everythingistheself'(atma-bhava), or 'everything is the Lord' (Narayana-bhava).

Youwillfailonehundredtimes,butitdoesnotmatter.Standupagain.Makefreshresolvesand sticktothemtenaciously.Marchonboldlywithsteadysteps,Oknowerofthyself:Neverdespair. Studythelivesoftheapostlesofnon-violence-LordBuddha,LordJesus,MahatmaGandhiand others,againandagain.Keeptheirmentalpictureandidealsbeforeyourmind'seyeanddraw inspirationfromthem.Carefullywatchyourconduct,thoughtandspeechanddeedsdailyand you willgrowsteadilyinthepracticeofnon-violence.

28JULY-AHIMSAISSUPREME VIRTUE

That workwhichgiveselevation,joyandpeacetothe mind, is right. That which brings depression, pain andrestlessnesstothemindiswrong.Thisisan easy way to find out what is right and what is wrong.

Selfishnesscloudsunderstanding.Thereforeifaman has got even a tinge of selfishness, he cannot detect whatisrightandwhatiswrong.Averypure, subtle, sharp intellect is needed for this purpose.

The Gitadescribesthenatureofsatva(purity),rajas (dynamism) and tamas (inertia in relation to reason) in chapter eighteen. It says:

"Thatwhichknowethenergyandabstinence,what ought to be done and what ought not to be done,fearandfearlessness,bondageandliberation - that reason is pure, O Partha. That by which oneunderstandethrightfromwrongandalsowhat ought to be done, and what ought not to be done-thatreason,OPartha,ispassionate.Thatwhich, enwrapped in darkness, thinketh wrong to beright,andwhichseethallthingssubverted-that reason, O Partha, is of darkness."

Variousotherdefinitionsaregivenbywisementohelp the students in the path of righteousness. In the Bibleitissaid

"Do untoothersasyouwouldbedoneby."

This is averygoodmaxim.Thewholegistofright conduct is here. If one practises this very carefully, he will not commit any wrong action.

"Ahimsaparamodharmah".Ahimsaisnon-injuring in thought and word and deed. "This is the highestofallvirtues."Ifoneiswellestablishedinahimsa of thought and word and deed, one can never doanywrongaction.

Ahimsacomesfirstinthepracticeofyamaorself-restraint. To give pleasure to others is right. To spreadmiseryandpain,iswrong.Onecanfollowthis in one's daily conduct towards others and can evolveinone'sspiritualpath.

Do not performanyactthatbringsyoushameorfear. You will be quite safe if you follow this rule. Stick to any rulethatappealstoyourreasonandconscience and follow it with faith and attention. You will soon evolveandreachtheabodeofeternal happiness.

29 JULY - WHAT IS SATYAM?

God is truth. He can be realised only by speaking truth and observing truth in thought, word and deed. Truthfulness, equal vision, self-control, absence of envious emulation, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of jealousy, charity, thoughtfulness, disinterested philanthropy, self-possession and unceasing and compassionate harmlessness are the thirteen forms of truth. Your thoughts should agree with your words and your words should agree with your actions. To think of one thing, say another and do a third is horrible - it is nothing but crookedness. By telling lies you pollute your conscience and infect your sub-conscious mind. The habit of telling lies will be carried on to your next birth and you will suffer in birth after birth. Have you ever thought of this?

If you are established in truth, all other virtues will cling to you. Penetrate more deeply into the kingdom of truth. Sacrifice your all for the truth. Die for the truth. Speak the truth. Truth is life and power. Truth is existence. Truth is knowledge. Truth is bliss. Truth is silence. Truth is peace. Truth is light. Truth is love. Live to realise the truth.

Truth is the law of life. Truth means the strength of will to abide by positive principles - a sense of justice, an unbiased mind and recognition of its subtle essence in all life. Truth is like a ladder leading to heaven, or a boat enabling one to cross the ocean of misery. Speak the truth, but let it not be unpleasant and speak not of any pleasing falsehood - this is eternal religion.

Fire burns everything; it is true to its nature. Water flows from a higher level; the seed sprouts and becomes a tree; the scorpion stings; these are all true to their nature. This is satyam. But man violates truth; he is ungrateful. He is not true to his essential nature. Wife poisons the husband; sons are not filial towards their fathers; sons murder their parents; this is not truth. To manifest one's essential divine nature, to manifest divine virtues is satyam or truth. To be true to one's own self is satyam.

A truthful man is free from worry and anxiety, he has a calm mind. He is respected by society. If you speak the truth for twelve years you will get vak-siddhi - then whatever you speak will come to pass. There will be great power in your speech - you will be able to influence thousands.

30 JULY – THIEVES!

Asteyaisnon-stealing.Thisisoneofthefivelimbsofyama(self-restraint).Thisisalsoanother form ofself-restraint.Whydoesamansteal?Hewantssomething.Whenhecannotgetitby legitimatewaysofearning,hebeginstostealthings.Desire(trishna)orwantistherootcausefor stealing. This is a deep-rooted, evil trait in man.

Controldesiresor(trishnas)andcravings.Reduceyourwants.Reflectanddovichara.Thinkofthe evil resultofstealing,namely,killingofconscience,dishonour,pin-pricks,guiltyconscience, unfitnessforyoga,badnameinsociety,punishmentthroughthelawofkarmaandpenalcode. Thinkoftheadvantagesofnon-theft(asteya)-honour,cleanconscience,rewardinheaven, fitness for the practice of yoga. You will at once stop this stealing habit.

Manremovesathingsecretlywithouttheknowledgeoftheowner;hedoesnotlikethathisact maybeknownbyothers.Thisisstealing.Takingblottingpaper,pins,paper,pencil,etc.,fromthe officeisstealing.Hoardingmoneytoomuchisstealing.Eatingtoomuchorgluttonyisstealing. Everthinkingofobjectsbyincreasingthewantsisalsostealinginacomprehensivesense.Keeping morethingsthanareactuallynecessaryisalsostealing.Ayogicstudentmustbefreefromall theseformsoftheft.Hemusthaveaverycleanmind-likethepurewhiteclothorcrystal.Then alone atman (self) will shine in his heart.

Manisnotverycarefulandconscientious.Hismindbringsupverycleverarguments.Some secretlytakeawaysomeoldjournalswhichcontainsomepicturesorusefulmatterandsay:"This is nothing.Itisonlyanoldcopy.Itwillgointothehandsofashop-keeperforpacking."Butthe thing is, he has removed it without the knowledge of the librarian, so it is theft.

Evenasensitivemindbecomesbluntgraduallybycontinuousstealing,byjumpingfromstealing smallthingstobigarticles.Evenalittledirt,alittletheftaffectsthemindofayogicstudent seriously.Hewillhavetobeverycarefulandvigilant.Hemustkeepthemindascleanasapolished mirror.Hemustavoidevenverylittletheftsinanyform.Thenalonewillhehavesuccessinyoga.

31 JULY - STEPS TO CELIBACY

There are four processes in the practice of brahmacharya (celibacy). First control the sex impulse and sex vasana (habit) through dama (control of senses) and pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), then practise conservation of sex energy. Shut all holes through which energy leaks; then divert the conserved energy into the proper spiritual channels through japa (repetition of God's name), kirtan (chanting), selfless service, pranayama (yoga breathing) and study, vigilance, self-analysis, introspection and vichara (enquiry). Then have conversion or sublimation of the sex-energy. Let it be converted into ojas (spiritual energy) or brahma-tejas (Brahmic radiance) through constant meditation (brahmachintana) and Lord's grace.

A vedantin diverts his mind through asserting, "I am all-purity. I am sexless atman (self). Om. Om. Om." A bhakta (devotee) diverts his mind through japa, kirtan, service of guru (preceptor), service in temple, study of Bhagavatam, Ramayana, etc. A karma (active) yogi diverts his mind. He is ever occupied in some kind of useful service or other. A hatha yogi converts the sex-energy through kriya yoga and dharana (concentration) and pratipaksha bhavana (meditation on the opposite) method.

In common parlance brahmacharya is single life. In yogic parlance it is restraint of, not only sex-indriya (sense), but all senses. All senses contribute their own share to sexual excitement, sexual urge. The sight raises impure thoughts. Food strengthens the sex indriya, as tongue and genitals are born from the same source. Hearing of love, talks, touch, smell - all excite passion. Therefore all senses must be controlled. Repression or suppression of sex-energy will not help much in the practice of brahmacharya. What is wanted is sublimation. Sex-energy must be entirely converted into ojas shakti or spiritual force. In transformation the gross form assumes a subtle form. The gross semen becomes a subtle force; this is also not enough. Sublimation only gives full protection.

Lustful gazing at women, talking on love matters and about women,gluttony, too much sleep, shaking of body and aimless wandering, a desire to be in the companyofwomen, are all forms of lust. Abandon all these. Practise purity in thought, word and deedandget established in satchidananda svaroopa (essential nature as existence consciousness-blissabsolute).

1 AUGUST - BENEFITS OF NON-COVETOUSNESS

Aparigraha is the fifth limb of yama (self-restraint). Parigraha is covetousness or greed, to possess and enjoy objects of the senses. Aparigraha is the opposite of parigraha. This is non-covetousness or non-acceptance of gifts; it is the absence of craving to possess and enjoy sensual objects. It is a mental state (bhava), wherein the sensual craving is dead. Parigraha leads to anxiety to preserve, to fear of loss, to sorrow in loss, to hatred, anger, untruthfulness, stealing, etc. Aparigraha puts an end to all these defects and bestows peace, contentment and satisfaction.

Aparigraha is indeed an aid to the practice of ahimsa (non-violence), satyam (truth), asteyam (non-stealing). When the craving is not satisfied you become angry, you hate the man who stands in your way of attaining and possessing things. You harm him in different ways; you speak untruth; you begin to steal things. The mind is ever in a state of agitation, restlessness, dissatisfaction and discontentment. Aparigraha removes all these defects. Mithya drsti (the seeing of falsehood in objects), dosa drsti (the seeing of defects in them), vairagya (dispassion), discrimination, dama (control of the senses) and pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses) are aids to the practice of aparigraha. Aparigraha is the common foundation for all yogas, just as dhyana (meditation) is the common meeting point of all yogas. It is a virtue to be practised not only by aspirants but by all persons of the world.

He who has no faith in the grace of the Lord and in the utterance of Lord Krishna in the Gita, "I ensure the welfare of the devotees who constantly think of me", will not practise aparigraha. The practice of aparigraha has wonderful benefits. It removes at one stroke, fear, attachment, disappointment, anxiety, agitation, restlessness, hatred, jealousy, anger, lust, greed, cares, worries, despair, and depression. Therefore practise aparigraha and become a dynamic yogi.

Pure love is bliss. Speak forgivingly, act lovingly, and serve lovingly. You will soon enter the kingdom of heaven or supreme peace. Hatred ceases not by hatred, but by love. Love is absolute goodness, honour, peace andpurity.

2 AUGUST - PURITY AND CONTENTMENT

Shaucha is internal and external purity. External purity generates pure thoughts. Practice of shaucha brings disgust for one's own body and the body of others also. You will soon give up mamata (mineness of body). Take a bath in the early morning and wear simple, clean cloth. You will get the meditative mood quickly. Shaucha helps to maintain brahmacharya. The practice of celibacy, kindness, love, mercy, patience, japa (repetition of God's name) and meditation will purify the heart and eradicate jealousy, cruelty, hatred, anger and lust. This is internal shaucha.

This is the first anga or limb of niyama (discipline). Niyama and yama (self-restraint) are interdependent. Niyama strengthens and safeguards yama. Removal of lust, anger, hatred, jealousy etc., constitutes internal purity. Internal purity is more important than external purity. Internal purity makes the mind one-pointed; it bestows serenity, cheerfulness, joy, strength, harmony, poise and happiness; it instils love, patience and magnanimity. Therefore develop internal purity through diligent and vigilant effort.

Contentment (santosha) cuts at the root of all desires. It gives success in the practice of yama. It gives peace, one-pointedness of mind, serenity and eternal satisfaction. Divine light will descend in a contented mind alone. A contented man is satisfied with his lot, he is happy in whatever condition he is placed, he does not crave for things he has not got. Contentment is a mystic stream of joy that cools the three fires of samsara and joins the ocean of immortal bliss.

Contentment - this is a mostvital subject. You all know the maxim: "A contented mind is a continual feast". The mind isalways restless on account of greed. Greed is a kind of internal fire that consumes a man slowly.Contentment is a powerful antidote for the poison of greed. There are four sentinels who guardthe domain of moksha (liberation). They are: santi, santosha, satsanga and vichara (peace,contentment, company of the holy and enquiry). If you can approach any of these sentinels, you can get hold of the other three. If you get hold of santosha (contentment) you can easilysee the other three following you.

3 AUGUST - SUPREME PEACE IS YOUR GOAL

Every man in the world is restless and is striving after something. What it is he does not know. In the accomplishment of ambitious projects he seeks the rest that he feels he is in need of - but he finds that worldly greatness, when secured, is a snare and a delusion. He does not find any real happiness or peace in it. He gets degrees, titles, honours, power, name, and fame. He marries, he begets children, he gets all he had supposed would give him happiness. But he finds no rest. Pious men, saints, sages declare that this restlessness of every man, this state of discontent, dissatisfaction and uncomfortableness, of being ill at ease with himself and his surroundings, is solely due to the loss of the companionship of the partner of his soul, God.

Peace is absolute serenity and tranquility, wherein all the mental modifications, thoughts, imagination, whims, fancies, moods, impulses and emotions, instincts etc., cease entirely and the individual soul rests in his own native, pristine glory, in an unruffled state. It is not, of course, the temporary condition of mental quietude which worldly people speak of in common parlance, when they retire for a short time to a solitary bungalow in a forest for a short rest. Peace is the fourth state of superconsciousness. It is the realm of supreme bliss, eternal life and eternal sunshine, where cares, worries, anxieties and fears which torment the soul here, dare not enter; where all distinctions of caste, creed and colour vanish altogether in the one embrace of the divine love and where desires and cravings find their full satiety.

Peace is within. Search for it in the chambers of your heart through one-pointed concentration and meditation. If you do not find peace there, you will not find it anywhere else. Remember, dear friends, that the goal of life is attainment of peace and not the achievement of power, fame and wealth.

Desire is the greatest enemy of peace. There is no peace for him who has no concentration. There can be no happiness for the unpeaceful. In that supreme peace all pains, all sorrows, miseries, tribulations vanish forever.

The peace of the eternal lies near those who know themselves, who are disjoined from desire and passion, subdued in nature and of subdued thoughts. The man who is endowed with supreme faith and who has mastery over his senses, quickly gets supreme peace.

4 AUGUST - TAPAS

That which purifies the impure mind is tapas. That which regenerates the lower animal nature and generates divine nature is tapas. That which cleanses the mind and destroys lust, anger, greed etc., is tapas. That which destroys tamas (dullness) and rajas (impurity) and increases satva (purity) is tapas. That which steadies the mind and fixes it on the eternal is tapas. That which arrests the outgoing tendencies, destroys vasana (habits), egoism, raga-dvesha (likes and dislikes) and generates dispassion, discrimination and meditation is tapas.

This is the third limb of niyama (discipline) in raja yoga. It is one of the three items of kriya (dynamic) yoga. Tapas means austerity or practice of penance. The man of tapas is brilliant like a blazing fire. Tapas means restraint of the senses and meditation. Also tapas leads to control of mind. Standing on one leg, raising one hand up for a long time is also tapas, but this is tamasic (dull) tapas of an ignorant man. Panchagni tapas is sitting in the midst of four fires in the hot sun, having the hot sun as the fifth fire. Vairagis practise this very often. Desire moves the senses; desire can be controlled only if the senses are curbed. Tapas annihilates desires. Annihilate tapas abhimana(pride of austerity). The unintelligent tapasvin (ascetic) is always irritable, hot tempered and proud. Practise intelligent tapas.

Mental tapas is more powerful than physical tapas. He who bears heat and cold does physical tapas. He increases his power of endurance, but he may not be able to bear insult. He will be easily upset by a harsh or unkind word. He may take revenge and do tit-for-tat. He has no control over the mind. He has disciplined only the physical body. To keep a balanced mind in all conditions of life, to bear insult, injury and persecutions, to be ever serene, contented and peaceful, to be cheerful in adverse conditions, to have fortitude in meeting danger, to have presence of mind and forbearance, are all forms of mental tapas.

"The men who perform severe austerities, unenjoined by the scriptures, wedded to vanity and egoism, impelled by the force of their desire and passion, unintelligent, tormenting the aggregated elements formingthe body and Me also, seated in the inner body, know these to be demoniacal in their resolves".(Gita. Chapter XVII.)

5 AUGUST - IMPORTANCE OF MAUNA

The organ of speech is a very great distracter of the mind. Too much talking indicates that the man is rajasic (restless). Talking makes the mind outgoing. Mauna (vow of silence) is almost death for the worldly man. It is a great blessing for the spiritual aspirant.

A worldly man always wants company and talk. This is his nature. Energy is wasted in this idle gossiping. Conserve this energy by mauna and utilise it for the contemplation of the divine. If you observe mauna for two months you will realise its advantages. Then you yourself will not leave the practice. If the organ of speech is checked then the eyes and ears come under control quite easily.

Mauna develops will power. It checks the impulse of speech. It is a great help in the observance of truth and the control of anger. Emotions are also controlled and irritability vanishes. A mauni (one who observes mauna) uses measured words and his speech is very impressive. A mauni first thinks whether his speech will wound the feelings of others, what sort of impression it will make on the minds of others, and so on. He is careful in his speech. He is thoughtful and considerate. He weighs each word before it comes out of his mouth. He can stay for a long time in seclusion. Practise. Feel the joy and peace of silence for yourself.

If you wish to observe mauna, you should keep yourself perfectly occupied in japa (repetition of God's name), meditation and mantra-writing. Do not mix with others. Do not come out of your room frequently. The energy used for speech should be sublimated into spiritual energy. It should be utilised for meditation. Then only you will enjoy serenity, calmness, peace and inner spiritual strength.

During mauna, introspect. Watch the thoughts. Then you will come to understand the ways of the mind and its workings. You can notice how the mind runs from one object to another in a moment's time. You will derive immense benefit from the practice of mauna. Real mauna is silence of the mind. Physical mauna eventually leads to silence of the mind.

Mauna of the mind is far superior to the mauna of speech. Mauna should come by itself. It must be natural. Forced mauna is only wrestling with the mind. It is an effort. If you live in truth, then mauna will come by itself, andthere will be absolute peace.

6 AUGUST - STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Svadhyaya is study of scriptures and books written by realised sages. It is one of the limbs of niyama (discipline) in raja yoga. Svadhyaya is also enquiry of the nature of atman (self), or, “Who am I?” It is recitation of mantras (sacred formulas) also. Svadhyaya is indirect satsanga, when you cannot get positive satsanga of mahatmas (company of holy ones). Svadhyaya clears doubts, it strengthens the flickering faith, it induces strong yearning for liberation or aspiration, it gives encouragement and illumination, it places before you a list of saints who trod the path, encountered and removed difficulties, and thus cheers you up with hope and vigour. It fills the mind with satva (purity). It inspires and elevates the mind. It helps concentration and meditation. Itcuts new satvic (pure) grooves and makes the mind run in these new grooves.

Svadhyaya is daily study of religious scriptures. It is daily parayana (study) of sacred books. It is the fourth anga (limb) of raja yoga niyama. It inspires and elevates the mind to high spiritual altitude. It clears doubts. It weeds out unholy ideas and cuts new spiritual grooves for the mind to move along. It reduces wandering of the mind (vikshepa). It helps concentration. It forms a kind of lower (savikalpa) samadhi (superconsciousness). It serves the purpose of spiritual pasture for the mind to graze upon. When you study the sacred books, you are in tune with the authors who are realised souls; you draw inspiration and become ecstatic.

Japa is the best of all spiritual practices in this modern age. It is the easiest too. Divine name alone will give you all success and bestow the highest spiritual attainments on you. The seeker after truth realises the highest goal of japa or recitation of the Lord’s name alone. Have faith in the saving grace of God and in the power of the Lord’s name. Repetition of the Lord’s name is a sure medicine for the disease of birth and death.

Japa of a mantra can bring the practitioner the realisation of his highest goal, even though he has noknowledge of its meaning. There is an indescribable power in the name of God (the mantra). Ifyou repeat it with concentration on it’s meaning you will attain God-realisation quickly.

7 AUGUST - JAPA IS IMPORTANT

Japa is an important anga (limb) of yoga. In the Gita you will find: “Yajnanam japa yajnosmi - among yajnas (religious practice) I am japa yajna”. In kali yuga (dark age) the practice of japa alone can give eternal peace, bliss and immortality. Japa ultimately results in samadhi (communion with the Lord). Japa must become habitual and must be attended with satvic (divine) bhava (feeling), purity, love and faith. There is no yoga greater than japa yoga. It can give you all siddhis (powers), whatever you want, bhakti (devotion) and mukti (freedom).

Japa is the repetition of the mantra (mystic formula). Dhyana is meditation on the form of the Lord and His attributes. This is the difference between japa and dhyana: there is meditation or dhyana with japa (japa-sahita): there is meditation or dhyana without japa (japa-rahita). In the beginning you should combine dhyana with japa. As you advance the japa drops away by itself - meditation alone remains. At an advanced stage you can practise concentration separately. You can do whatever you like best in this respect. Om is both saguna and nirguna (manifested and unmanifested) Brahman. If you are a devotee of Rama you can repeat Om Rama for the manifestation of the manifested Brahman.

The name (nama) and the object (rupa), signified by the name, are inseparable. Whenever you think of the name of your son, his figure stands before your mental eye and vice versa. Even so, when you do japa of Rama Rama or Krishna Krishna, the picture of Rama or Krishna will come before your mind. Therefore japa and dhyana go together. They are inseparable.

Whilst you are doing japa of any mantra, think that you are really praying to your ista devata (chosen, beloved divinity). Think that your ista devata is really listening to you, that He is looking at*you with merciful or graceful eyes and that, with open hands, He is giving you full abhaya dana (asking you to be free from all fears whatsoever) with a view to giving you your desired objects. Entertain this bhava.

Do the japa with feeling. Know the meaning of the mantra. Feel the Lord’s presence in everything, everywhere. Draw closer to Him when you repeat His name. Think He is shining in the chambers of your heart. Think that He is witnessing the repetition of the mantra, just as He is the witness of your every action.

8 AUGUST - INSTRUCTION IN JAPA

Make the divine name the sheet-anchor and prop of your life. If you take to the recitation of the divine name, all inauspiciousness will certainly vanish. Om Tat Sat is the most excellent of mantras (mystic formula). One becomes a siddha (perfect being) by japa of this mantra, Om Tat Sat. By repetition of this mantra, Om Tat Sat one becomes the conqueror of death. Practice of the divine names and sincere prayer to the Lord, are the greatest purifiers of the heart and of human nature.

After selecting a suitable mantra, stick to it. Frequent change of mantra is not desirable. All mantras mean and signify the same thing - the supreme truth, the one eternal, infinite, almighty being. Ever remember the Lord. His divine name is the greatest treasure in this life. His name has got indescribable power. It bestows blessings upon all those who have faith.

Remembrance of the Lord is auspiciousness and forgetfulness of the Lord is inauspiciousness. Reciting the names of the Lord at bedtime is a good practice. Sing the Lord's names. Dance in ecstasy. Be regular in your sadhana (spiritual practice). Realise the self in this very birth.

Japa is of three kinds: manasic (mental), upamsu (humming) and vaikhari (audible) japa. Mental japa is more powerful than audible japa.

Get up at 4 a.m. and do japa for two hours. This is the most favourable time for japa and for meditation. If you cannot take a bath, wash your hands, face, feet before sitting for japa. Face north when sitting as this enhances the efficacy of the japa. Sit on a kusa (grass) seat or deer skin or rug, with a white cloth spread over it. This conserves body electricity. Recite some prayers before starting japa. Have a steady pose. Be able to sit on padma, siddhas or sukha asana for three hours at a stretch.

Repetition of the mantra removes the dirt of the mind things such as lust, anger and greed. The mind from which the impurities have been removed, acquires the capacity to reflect the highest spiritual truth.

9 AUGUST - REGULAR JAPA

Never dojapa(repetitionofGod'sname)inahurriedmanner.Doitslowlywithone-pointedness of mindandsingle-mindeddevotion.Pronouncethemantradistinctlyandwithoutmistakes.Do not repeatittooquicklyortooslowly. Do not usetheindexfingerwhiletellingthebeads.Usethethumb,themiddleandthering fingers. Whenthecountingofonemillisover,revertthemillandcomebackagain.Crossnotthe meru (the"top"beadintherosary).Whilstdoingjapa,coveryourhandwithatowel. Be vigilant.Keepanalertattentionduringjapa.Whensleeptriestooverpoweryou,standupand do japa.Resolvetofinishacertainminimumnumberofmalasbeforeleavingyourseat.

The mala(rosary)isawhiptogoadthemindtowardsGod.Sometimesdojapawithoutamala; just go bytheclock.Alongwiththejapa,practisemeditation.Graduallyjapawilldropand meditation alone will continue.

Havefoursittingsforjapaeachday.Theseshouldbeintheearlymorning,atnoon,intheevening andatnight.Regularityinjapasadhana(practice)ismostessential.Sitinthesameplace,atthe same time, always.

Japamustbecomeahabit.Evenindreamyoumustbedoingjapa.Japayogaistheeasiest, quickest,safest,surestandcheapestwayforattainingGod-realisation.GlorytotheLord!Glory, glory to his name.

HoldfasttotheLord.LoveHim.EmbraceHim.Donotworryovertrifles.Dojapaconstantly.Recite thenameconstantly.ThenameoftheLordaloneisboundtoachievewhatnothingelsecan achieveinthekaliyuga(ironage).Washthemindwiththewateroftheord'sname.Cleanseit ofdesire,jealousy,pride,hatred,etc.Singthenameagainandagain.Youwillreachtheother shore of fearlessness and immortality.

10 AUGUST - SELF-SURRENDER

Surrender is ishvarapranidhana - the devotee consecrates all his works and their fruits to the Lord. The devotee has no will of his own. He says unto the Lord, “I am thine. All is thine. Thy will be done. I am an instrument in thy hands.” In surrendering one’s will to the Lord, his will becomes one with the cosmic will. He becomes one with the Lord. There is no loss in surrendering one’s will to the Lord.

Self-surrender is complete surrender of the self to God. Self-surrender makes the devotee feel the reality of divine grace and the Lord’s readiness to bestow help on him at all times. The divine influence streams into his being and moulds it to make it a fit medium for divine realisation and divine instrumentality.

Surrender and grace are interrelated. Surrender draws down grace and grace makes surrender complete. Surrender starts the purification of the heart and grace completes it. Without grace complete unification is not possible. Grace divinises your being in order that the constant inflow and inspiration can be received and retained. It is through divine grace alone that one’s whole being is galvanised and rejuvenated.

The self-arrogating little ego perishists and resists again and again. It clings leech like to old habits, cravings and desires. It wages guerilla war; it resists surrender. It demands certain objects for its secret gratification. The whole being should be surrendered. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says: “tameva saranam gaccha sarvabhavena bharata, (flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharata)”. The chitta, the ego, the mind, the intellect and the soul, should all be placed at the feet of the Lord. Mira did this and so obtained the grace of Lord Krishna and became one with him.

The vulgar, stiff, obstinateegois harder than diamond, reinforced concrete or steel. It is very difficult to melt it. Constantvigilance and ceaseless effort are necessary to slay this dire enemy of peace and wisdom. It keepssubtle desires for its own silent appeasement. Introspect. Find out the subtle desires that lurkinthe corners of your heart, through the search-light of concentration and discrimination. Kill themthrough regular, silent meditation.

11 AUGUST - SELF-SURRENDER --- TRUE AND FALSE

Self-surrender is a safe and sure means of God-realisation. Surrender yourself and all your belongings to the feet of the supreme. Live a life of godliness. Think that nothing is yours and that everything belongs to God - this is surrender to God. Give the power of attorney to God; let him do whatever he wants. You will have no worry and no anxiety. You will be peaceful.

Surrender contains intense love and faith. It must be complete - the entire being must be surrendered to the Lord - mind, intellect, chitta and egoism. Desire and egoism are the two great obstacles to self-surrender.

Ifthe mind says: “I am thine O Lord”; if the ego says “I must become a High Court Judge”; if the intellect says: “I am a great devotee”; if the chitta says: “I must attain siddhis”; this will not constitute perfect, unreserved surrender. This is only cheating the Lord, the inner ruler and witness.

After surrendering to the Lord you should not grumble, fret and fume when any trouble comes. You should not complain to the Lord: “O Lord, you have no eyes. You have no compassion.” If you complain, then there is no meaning in your surrender. Through surrender the devotee immerses himself into the eternal essence. You can endear yourself to the Lord only by self-surrender. The more the surrender the more the grace.

In difficulties and struggles, God will give you the strength and inner peace to bear them - this is his grace. Constant remembrance of the Lord; constant recitation of His name will fill your heart with satva (purity) and immense strength and peace to face the most trying conditions with perfect calmness and serenity.

Have perfect trust in God. Surrender to Him. Place yourself in his loving care - do this with your whole heart and mind, with perfect confidence and faith. Worry not about your future, about money, about your health - He will take care of you. You will have plenty; you will have immense strength and wonderful health.

12 AUGUST - YOGA OF SELF-SURRENDER

Repeatthisformulaveryoftenandwithintensefaith:“TheLordismystrength, my support and my stay.” Thus you will derive strength, power and peace.

GodknowswhatisbestforyouandHedoeswhatisbestforyou.Hisways are mysterious - know Hiswaysandbecomewise.Slayegoismanddesire,theyaretheenemies, the obstacles of self-surrender.YoumayaccuseGodandsay:“Heisnotjust;Heiscruel.Vicious persons are thriving I amvirtuousandyetIsuffer.ThereisnoGod.”LateronyouwillrealisethatHe has done the best thing for you.

DonotpraytotheLordfortheremovalofsufferings.PraytoHimtogrant you power of endurance andpatiencetobearallcalamities.Adevoteeremainsunaffectedby adversities, trials and tribulations.Heknowsandfeelssthattheyareallkarmicpurgationsand are the real messengers of God. He welcomes them calmly.

Adevoteealonegetstroublesandadversities;becausethisishislastbirth many karmas have to beworkedoutandhemustbeunitedwiththeLordinthisverybirth.God gives immense strength andpatiencetoHisdevoteetobeartroublesandcalamities.Thedevotee is ever calm and cheerful-heisnotaffectedbythemashismindeverdwellsinthecontemplation of the Lord. He is notbody-conscious.

Murmernot.Grumblenot.EvenaleafcannotfallwithoutthewillofGod. What is destined to take placeaswilledbyGod,takesplace.Facethedifficulties,thebattle of life with a smile. Becomeabravesoldier.Difficultiescometointensifyyourfaith,tostrengthen your will and power of enduranceandtoturnyourmindmoreandmoretowardsGod.

Pain is the greateye-opener.Itisyoursilentteacher.Itwillmakeyouremember God. Kunti prayed “O Lord Krishna,givemepainalwayssothatImayeverrememberyou.” The more troubles and adversities youget,thestrongerandfirmerwillbeyourfaithinGod.They will mould you into a divine being. Welcomethem.

Seek God’s grace throughself-surrenderandHewillshowyoutheway.Transient are all mundane things! Evanescent are allearthlyforms!Seektheimmortalandattainbliss eternal.

13AUGUST-DEVELOPTHEBODY TOO

Physical culture ordevelopmentofthebodyisasimportant as the development of the mind, will or memory. If thebodyisnotkeptstrongandhealthy,vigorous and active, no culture is possible. All cultures dependonasoundbody.Thereisawisesaying: “A sound mind in a sound body.” The body is the-templeofGod.Itshouldbekeptscrupulously clean by daily bath, a good scrub with a clean towel - thisopenstheporeswhichmayhavebeen clogged by sweat and sebum.

There are different types of physical culture.Select one according to your needs, taste, temperamentandcapacity.Amaninpoorhealthshould take long brisk walks, morning and evening. Alwayswalkalone;thenyoufeelthepresenceof the almighty everywhere and you can be in perfectharmonywithnature.Morningwalksarepleasant. The cool breeze is refreshing and the fragranceoftheflowersisinvigorating.Finishthewalk before sunrise. The walking itself should bebrisk;youshouldhavegoodperspiration.Only then it is exercise. Walk at least three or four milesaday.Dopranayamawhilstwalking.Inhalefor six steps, retain for six steps and then exhale forsixsteps.Thisisgoodpractice.

Be strictlyregularintheperformanceoftheexercises-this is essential for rapid progress. Those doingvigorousexerciseshouldtakesubstantial,nutritious food - otherwise their muscles will waste.Theyshouldtakeplentyofghee(clarifiedbutter),milk, butter, nuts etc. Those who practise the head-standshouldtakealightmealabouttenminutes after they have finished the asanas. Weighyourbodyonceamonthandkeeparecord.Doexercise both morning and evening. Then rest forhalfanhourbeforetakingyourbath.

Observebrahmacharya(celibacy)asmuchasyoucan.Ifyou remain a strict celibate you will attain astonishingresults.Whatisthereinawoman?Whatisthere in repeating the same old act again and againwhichissodisgraceful?Areyounotashamedof all that? Do you not realise that it is all the playofavidya(ignorance)andfalsemoha(delusion)? Strengthen the body and then do spiritualsadhana(practice).Youwillenjoyrealbliss.Ibeseech you - learn to be wise - at least from nowon.

Treat thisbodyasyourservantandinstrument.Youaredistinct from this physical body which is only madeupofthefiveelementsandissubjecttodecay and death. You are in essence the reality, theall-pervading,imperishableatman(self).Identification with the body is the root-cause for bondage,forhumanmiseryandsuffering.Donotbecome the slave of the body.

14 AUGUST - MENTAL HEALTH IS VITAL

Good health is the prerequisiteforspiritualpursuits.Thepracticeofyogaasanasforevenfifteen minutes a day will help to keepgoodhealth.Becomequitefitandyouwillbehaleandhearty. Without good health you cannotwagewaragainsttheturbulentsensesandtheboisterousmind. Body, mind and spirit constituteman.Thereisanintimaterelationbetweenbodyandmind.The body is the mould preparedbythemind,foritsownenjoyment.Spiritisthesubstratumforthe body and the mind. Mentalhealthisevenmorevitalthanphysicalhealth.Thespringofloveliness flows from health. Every joythatenlivensyourheartcomesfromhealth.Lackofcheerfulness contributes to physical ill-health.Ifoneisalwayscheerfulandentertainsgoodanddivine thoughts, he will not sufferfromanydisease.Hewillhaveperfecthealthatalltimes.

Allow your body to respondfreelytotheactionofnaturalagents.Putyourselfintunewiththe source of all health, power andstrength.Thecosmicforceforwell-beingwillthenin-fillyou.This is the ultimate factor behindalltherapeutics.Thisisthesecrettobearinmind.Useitforthe background for the treatmentofyourills,bothbodilyandmental.

With your being harmonisedwiththeall-pervadingcosmicbeing,youwillcrosstheoceanof worldly existence by vigorousspiritualsadhana(practice).And,throughHisabundantgraceand blessing, may you attain healthandlonglife.Inone'sendeavourtoutiliseone'spowerinthe quest of truth, the health ofthebodyisofgreatimportance.Manalwaystalksofgoodhealthbut does little or nothing aboutit.Youmusthaveabodythatisfit,strongandhealthy-thenalone you will have a mind that canworktothefullcapacity.

Health and strength can beyourswithalittlepositivethinking,carefulregulationofpersonal habits, observance of nature'slawsanddailymeditation.Thesourceofallhealthandhealingis thy self. The power to overcomeallconditionsliesinyou.Perishistentlyassertyoureverperfect spiritual nature. Feel thyself tobeanoceanofperfecthealth,strengthandvigour.Allowthemind to dwell on this continuously.

15 AUGUST - YOGA ASANAS

Health is wealth. Good health is a valuable asset for one and all. It can be achieved by the practice of yogaasanas,whichcontroltheemotionsandproducementalpeace.Italsodistributesprana evenly throughout the body and different systems. It helps in maintaining the healthy functioning of theinternalorgans.Itgivesinternalmassagetothevariousabdominalorgans.

Physical exercises draw the prana out but asanas send the prana in. The practice of asanas cures many diseases and it awakens the kundalini shakti. These are the chief advantages of the yogic system of exercises advantages which none of the other systems have.

Practise a few asanas daily - at least for fifteen minutes. Soon you will possess wonderful health. Be regularinyourpractice-thisisofparamountimportance.Asanasshouldbedoneonanempty stomach in the morning or at least three hours after food. Morning is the best time to do the asanas. Do not wear your spectacles whilst doing them. Wear a langotee and a singlet if necessary.

Be moderateinyourdiet.Practisebrahmacharya(celibacy).Beginwithaminimumtimeand gradually increase it. Answer the calls of nature before you begin doing the asanas. The endocrine glands play an important part in the economy of nature. The practice of sarvangasana keeps the thyroid healthy and this means a healthy functioning of all the organs and systems in the body. The diaphragm, the muscular partition between the chest and the abdomen, is also developed by certain exercises such as - dhanurasana, mayurasana, and paschimottanasana. The movement of the diaphragm massages the abdominal viscera and organs. There will be daily evacuation of the bowels in the morning. Constipation, dyspepsia and a host of other ailments of the stomach and intestines will disappear.

Four asanas are prescribed for the purposes of japa (repetition of God's name) and meditation. They are padma, siddha, svastika and sukha. Be able to sit in any of these for three hours without shaking. Then only you will be able to control the breath and do meditation. If you can be steady in thepostureforevenanhouryouwillacquireaone-pointedmindandfeelinfinitepeace.

16 AUGUST - BENEFITS OF YOGA ASANAS

The practice of Asanas develops the body and the practitioner himself is kept agile and nimble. He has an elastic spine and a supple body. He has a keen and vigorous appetite. Any trouble is removed at its starting point by the practice of Asanas.

The three important organs, that is the heart, the lungs, and the brain and cerebro-spinal system, are kept in a healthy condition. The vital forces are preserved and increased. The circulation of the blood in the arteries and veins is kept in proper order by the practice of Asanas. There is no stagnation of the blood in any part of the body.

The practitioner of asanas always laughs heartily and radiates joy, strength and vigour wherever he moves. He always gets success in all his attempts. He looks very young even at the age of sixty. He is endowed with a peculiar glow in his face and eyes. He possesses a peculiar charm in his smile.

By practising the asanas regularly, men and women will acquire a figure which will enhance their beauty, and a suppleness which gives charm and elegance to every movement.

Health is thy birthright - not disease. Strength is thy heritage but not weakness; efficiency but not inefficiency; courage but not fear; bliss but not sorrow; peace but not restlessness; knowledge but not ignorance; immortality but not mortality.

This body is the moving temple of God. It is an instrument for crossing the ocean of samsara or the round of birth and death. It is the instrument for attaining the supreme abode of immortality, eternal bliss and perennial joy. It is a horse that can take you to the destination, the goal of life. Therefore it must be kept healthy and strong.

Proper training and care ofthe body, on an intelligent basis, is necessary. There should be harmonious development ofall the muscles of the body, organs, nerves and frame.

17 AUGUST - SEE THE RESULTS

For those who have poorly developed chests, respiratory exercises are necessary. For those who have excess fat in the abdomen, abdominal exercises are essential. Exercises that are best calculated to improve the function of vital inner organs of the body and tone them up to counteract the tendency towards disease, are also indispensable.

The lungs can be developed through the practice of deep breathing exercises. By pranayama (yoga breathing), the apices of the lungs will get a proper supply of oxygen. There will be an improvement in the quality and the quantity of the blood. All the tissues and cells will be nourished with pure blood and lymph. The process of metabolism will be carried out in an efficient manner.

Ifthe joints move freely, the ligaments and the surrounding tissues will be in a proper, healthy condition. Free movement of the spine will prevent stiffening and contraction of the spine. Ossification and degeneration of the bones of the spinal column (merudanda) will also be checked. A thickened and immovable joint gives a great deal of discomfort and uneasiness.

By the practice of asanas free movement is given to the elbow, wrist, ankle, shoulder and spinal joints. Muscles of the cervical, dorsal and lumbar regions are stretched and relaxed. There is dorsal and lumbar lifting and the body is kept in a fit condition.

Asanas are the system of yogic exercises of the Indian rishis (sages) of yore, based on exact principles. These are adapted for both men and women, for people of the East and West. You can keep up meditation while performing the asanas. This is accompanied by pranayama or regulation of the breath.

These exercises are preventative and curative. Some of them twist the body forwards and backwards. Others help the lateral movement of the spine. Thus the body as a whole is developed, toned and strengthened. The whole course can be finished in fifteen minutes. Within this short period you can realise the maximum benefit. This system is simple, exact, efficacious, economical of time and capable of being self practised.

18 AUGUST - PRANAANDPRANAYAMA Breath is externalmanifestationofprana,thevitalforce.Breath, like electricity, is gross prana. Breath is sthula(gross)andpranaissukshma(subtle).Byexercising control over this breathing you can controlthesubtlepranainside.Controlofpranameans control of mind. Mind cannot operate withoutthehelpofprana.

The vibrationsofpranaproducethoughtinthemind.Itisprana that moves the mind. It is prana that sets the mindinmotion.Itisthesukshmapranaorpsychic prana that is intimately connected with the mind.

Breath representstheimportantflywheelofanengine.Justas other wheels stop when the driver stops the flywheel,allotherorgansstopworkingwhenthe yogi stops the breath. If you can control theflywheelyoucaneasilycontroltheotherwheels. Likewise, if you can control the breath, theexternalbreath,thenyoucaneasilycontrolthe inner vital force, the prana. The process bywhichthepranaiscontrolled,bytheregulation of external breath, is termed pranayama.

Just as thegoldsmithremovestheimpuritiesfromgold,byheating it in the hot furnace and by strongly blowingtheblow-pipe,soalsotheyogicmethodremoves the impurities of the body and the indriyas(senses),byblowingthelungs-thatis,bypractising pranayama.

The chiefaimofpranayamaistounitethepranawiththeapana and to take the united pranapana slowly towardsthehead.Theeffects,orfruit,ofpranayama is the awakening of the sleeping kundalini.

“He whoknowspranaknowstheveda,”istheimportantdeclaration of the srutis. In the Vedanta Sutras youwillfind:“Forthesamereason,breathisBrahman.” Prana is the sum total of all energy that is manifestintheuniverse.Itisthesumtotalofalltheforces in nature.

Prana is the sumtotalofalllatentforcesandpowerswhich are hidden in men and which lie everywhere aroundus.Heat,light,electricityandmagnetism are all manifestations of prana. All forces, all powers,andprana,springfromthefountainorcommon source - the atman.

19 AUGUST - PRANA CONTROL

Prana is expended by thinking, willing, acting, moving, talking, writing, etc. A healthy and strong man has an abundance of prana, nerve force, vitality. Prana is supplied in water, in food, in air and in solar energy. Excess prana is stored in the brain and nerve centres. Seminal energy, when sublimated or transformed, supplies an abundance of prana to the system. It is stored in the brain in the form of 'ojas'.

The yogi stores abundant prana by regular practice of pranayama. The yogi who has stored up a large supply of prana radiates strength and vitality. Those who come in close contact with him imbibe prana from him and get strength, vigour, vitality and exhilaration of spirits. Just as water flows from one vessel to another, prana flows, like a steady current, from a developed yogi to a weaker person. This may actually be seen by one who has developed his inner, psychic vision.

Breath is the external manifestation of gross prana. Correct habits of breathing must be established by the regular practice of pranayama. If you can control prana, you can completely control all the forces of the universe, mental and physical. The yogi can also control the omnipresent, manifesting power out of which all energies take their origin. He can control magnetism, electricity, gravitation, cohesion, nerve-currents, vital forces or thought vibrations. In fact he can control the total forces of the universe, both physical and mental.

A yogi can withdraw prana from any area. That area then becomes numb; it becomes impervious to heat and cold. He can send prana also to any area, and make it oversensitive. He can send prana to the eyes and see distant objects. He can send prana to the nose and can experience divya gandha (supernatural scent). He can send prana to the tongue and can experience supersensuous taste.

There is great significance in theorder of the angas (limbs) of raja yoga. Practice of asana (posture) controls rajas (restlessness). Brahmacharya (celibacy) purifies the prana. Pranayama purifies the nadis (astral tubes). Pranayamaitsteadies the mind and makes it fit for concentration . It removes rajas and tamas (dullness) Thepractice of yama (self-restraint), niyama (discipline), asana and pranayama are all auxiliariesinthe practice of concentration. Pranayama reduces the velocity of the mind. It makes it run andsmaller and smaller circles.

20 AUGUST - KUNDALINI YOGA Kundalini shakti is the coiled up, dormant, cosmic power that underlies all organic and inorganic
matter. It is the primordial energy that lies at the basal centre (muladhara cakra) in a dormant, potential state. Kundalini yoga treats of kundalini shakti, the seven cakras (centres of spiritual energy), and the arousing of this sleeping kundalini.

Nadis are astral tubes that carry pranic currents. They cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are not the ordinary nerves, arteries and veins. There are 72,000 nadis. Three are important. They are the ida, the pingala, and the sushumna. Sushumna is the most important because kundalini passes through this nadi only.

The first step in kundalini yoga is the purification of the nadis. When sushumna is pure, then only will the kundalini pass through it. Kundalini is awakened by pranayama, asana and mudras by hatha yogins; through concentration by raja yogins; through devotion and perfect self-surrender by devotees; through analytical will by the jnanis; by japa (repetition) of mantra (God's name) and the grace of the guru (preceptor).

That aspirant who has firm faith in the scriptures, who is courageous, devotional, humble, generously merciful., pure and dispassionate, can easily awaken the kundalini and attain success in samadhi (superconsciousness). He should also be equipped with right conduct and self-restraint. He should constantly engage himself in the service of his guru and he should be free from lust, anger, delusion, greed and vanity.

When kundalini is taken to the sahasrara (the crown of the head), when she is united with Lord Siva, perfect samadhi (the superconscious, blissful state) ensues. Now the yogi drinks the nectar of immortality. May mother kundalini guide you all in your yogic practices! May her blessings be upon you all!

WHAT IS THIS WORLD?

This world is a mass of energy or electrons,

This is the view of scientists.

This world is all shakti,

This is the view of the saktas.

The essence of the world is Brahman, the absolute,

This is the view of vedantins.

Thus sayeth Sivananda

21 AUGUST - DEVELOP YOUR SIGHT

Whenever you meetaperson,lookathisfigurecarefullyfromtoptobottom.Mentallynotehis peculiar features-theconditionofhiseyes,eyebrows,teeth,armsetc.,thesortofdressheis wearing, what kindofcaphewears,whetherhehasamoustacheornot.Noticehisbehaviour, his looks, his gait,whetherheseemstobekind-heartedorcruel,whetherheisintelligentordull, polite or impolite,hiscolour,etc. Many peoplecannotgiveacleardescriptionofthefacesoftheirownfriends,theirownparents!

The obviousreasonisthattheyhavenotdevelopedthepowerofmemory.Enteryourfriend's room; noticecarefullyallthethingsyouseethere.Thencloseyoureyesandreflect.Comeoutof the roomandnotementallyallthethingswhichtheroomcontains,inorder.Thenre-enterthe room andverifywhatyounoticed.Practisethisforsomemonths-youwilldevelopawonderful power ofsight.

Memorycultureisvery,veryimportant.ItbringssuccessinGod-realisationaswell.Aforgetful man alwaysfailsinhisendeavours-hecommitsseriousmistakesagainandagain.Amanwitha strong andretentivememorygetssanguinesuccessinallhisventuresandundertakings.Hewho has memorycanconducthisbusinessaffairsverysuccessfully.Astudentwhohasaretentive memory willgetsuccessinallhisexaminations.Intelligenceisonlyone-tenthofmemory.

The Sanskrittermformemoryissmrti.Smaranaisremembering.Thisisthefunctionofthesub-consciousmindorchitta.Thesamskaras(habits)ofthinkingandactingaredeeplyimpressedin the chitta,whichislikethesensitiveplateofacamera.Allimpressionsareindeliblyrecorded there. Wheneveryouattempttorememberpasteventsorthings,theycometothesurfaceof the mindthroughthetrap-door.Theycomeoutintheformofbigwavesofthoughtorasmental images.

He whodwellsinthesub-consciousmind(chitta)andinmemory,hewhoiswithinthismemory, whomthechittaandthememorydonotknow,whosebodyisthememory(andsub-conscious mind),whorulesthememoryandchittafromwithin,heisthyself,theinnerruler,immortal atman, antaryami, amritam. My silent adorations and prostrations to this inner ruler!

22 AUGUST - MEMORY CULTURE

Take up memoryculture.Taketoanyexercisethatsuitsyoubestandputitintodailypractice. Keep a dailyrecordthisisveryimportant.Mereskippingoverthepageswillnotdo.Youwillnot be benefited.Ifyoureallywantrapidimprovement,ifyouwanttobecomearealman,putthe lessons intopracticeandtakedownnotes.Youcanwatchyourprogressandcorrectyour mistakes. Learn

theartofextractingworkfromthesubconsciousmind.Ifyouwanttorememberaforgotten passage,giveadefinitemessagetothesub-consciousmindjustbeforeyouretiretobed.Talkto the sub-consciousmind,justasyouwouldtalktoafriend.Givetheorderinclearterms.The followingmorningitwillplacethewordsbeforeyou.Ifthisfailswaitwithacalmmindtillthe answercomesfromthesub-consciousminditself.Afteryouarewellupinmemoryculture,you can takeupwillculture.Successinmemoryculturewillgiveyouagreatimpetusinwillculture. You willrejoicenow.Youwilltraineverynerveinthepracticeofwillculture.Youhavestartedthe current and it will keep up your zeal and enthusiasm.

Practisetheassertionsboldlyandcalmly.Fullyunderstandthemeaningofeveryassertion.Tryto feel it.Thisfeelingwillslowlymanifest.Donotbediscouraged.Youwillhavetofightyourold enemies,theoldsamskaras.Trytodeveloppatience,attention,powerofendurance,balanceof mind, presence of mind and so on.

Pay greatattentiontothis;youwillderivegreatbenefitfromit.Willisdynamicsoul-force.If renderedpureandirresistible,itcanworkwonders,Thereisnothingyoucannotachievewitha strong will,Themajorityofpersonshavenoconsciousnessofwillormindorintellect,though they talkmuchof‘will’and‘mind’.

The willhasbecomeimpureandweakthroughvasanas(desires).Whenadesireiscontrolledit becomeschangedintowill.Sexualenergy,musculareenergy,anger,etc.,arealltransmutedinto will-force when they are controlled. The fewer the desires, the stronger the will.

The forceofbrahmacharyaisatthebackofwill.Nowillcultureispossiblewithoutbrahmacharya. Will is anothernamefortheforceofcelibacy.Satsankalpaisthepurewillingofjnanis.Theycan do anythingthroughsatsankalpa.

23 AUGUST - DEVELOP WILL POWER

Attention, power of endurance, overcoming aversion, dislikes and irritations, fortitude in suffering, tapas, fasting, patience, command of temper, forbearance, clemency mental power of endurance, firmness in meeting danger, power of resistance in attack, keeping up daily diary - all the pave a long way towards developing the will. You should patiently hear the words of others even though they are not interesting and charming. You should not fret and fume. Patient hearing develops will and wins the hearts of other Do actions or tasks that are uninteresting - this also develops will power. The actions that are uninteresting will become interesting after some time.

Never complain against bad environments. Create your own mental world wherever you remain, wherever you go. The mind deludes you, at every moment, at every step. Try to overcome the obstacles and difficulties by suitable means Do not try to run from bad, unfavourable environments. Go has placed you there to make you grow quickly.

Man must learn to separate himself from the vehicles in which he thinks, feels, acts, desires. He must know them to be part of the not-self, as material, external to life Thus the energy that went out to objects of lower desires becomes a higher desire, guided by the mind, and is then prepared to be transmuted into will. As the lower mind merges into the higher will and into that which is wisdom, the aspect of pure will emerges as the power of the spirit, self-determined, self-ruled, in perfect harmony with the supreme will and therefore free. Then only, all the bonds are broken and the spirit is unconstrained by anything outside itself. Then and then alone the will be said to be free.

If a calamity occurs, yourmindshouldnot be upset. Keep the mind cool and calm. Have presence of mind. Do not cry overspiltmilk-ithas come to pass, so face it with a cheerful countenance. Make the best of things.“Whatcannotbe cured must be endured.” Keep an unruffled mind. Do not be carried away byunduesentiments and bubbling emotions. Control the mind. Reflect how. the calamity has comeabout.

There is always scopeforsuitable,effective, easy methods to tide over the crisis. Allow the turban to pass off when yourheadisonthepoint of being knocked down. This is sagacity. This is prudence. This is wisdom.Developforesight, wisdom - many obstacles and calamities will be obviated. Do not broodoverfailures,defects, mistakes. This will weaken your will power. Let the defects remain there.Theywillberemoved quickly when the will grows and when the will becomes purer and purer,strongerandstronger.

24 AUGUST - WITHDRAW THE MIND

Pratyaharaisabstractionorwithdrawalofthesenses.Fromitstarts the real inner spiritual life and the externalworldisshutout.Yama,niyama,asana,pranayama all prepare the aspirant for the practiceofpratyahara.Themindisrenderedcalmbythepractice of brahmacharya (celibacy) and aparigraha(non-covetousness).Asanaandpranayamasqueeze out the rajas (restlessness). Pranayamacheckstheout-goingtendenciesofthemind.Nowthemind can easily be detached.

Pratyaharagivesinnerspiritualstrengthandgreatpeaceofmind. It develops will power and removesallsortsofdistractions.Anunsteadyasana(posture),toomuch talking, too much mixing, toomuchwork,toomuchfood,toomuchwalking,toomuchofactivity (vyavahara) and poking one'snoseintotheaffairsofothers,allproducemuchdistractionof the mind and stand in the way of the practice of pratyahara.

Whenyoumixwithpeople,againandagain,fixthemindonyourlakshya (point of concentration). Rest inyourbackgroundofthought-whethersaguna(form)orabstract vedantic image. This servesasastrongfortresstoprotectyoufromtheonslaughtofworldly thoughts.

Keepasteadypose,beregularinthepracticeofpranayama,cultivate vairagya (dispassion), vichara(enquiry)andviveka(wisdom).Alwayslookatthedefects of a sensual life. Develop serenity,contentment,patience.Bepersevering,tenaciousandever-vigilant. Pray to the Lord. Sing. Dojapa(repetitionofGod'sname).Obtaindivinegrace. Observe mauna (silence), moderationindietandseclusion.Practisecelibacy.Sticktoresolves. Live in seclusion. Be bold. Be pure.Bewise.Havesatsanga(holycompany).Giveupevilcompany. Then you will have success in pratyahara.

Concentrationisthedirectmethodtogetsuccessinpratyahara.Sitin a quiet room and withdraw the senses. Haveaspiritualbackgroundofthoughtandthemindwill rest in this when released from work. Japaisanothermethod.Dividethemind.Fixoneportion on God and let the other portion work. Sightlessgazeisalsoanotheraid.Feelthatthisworld is the manifestation of the Lord. Understandthatlastinghappinesscanonlybehadintheatman within. It is difficult to say where pratyaharaendsandconcentrationbegins.Concentrationfor twenty seconds makes one meditation and twentysuchmeditationsmakeonesamadhi(superconscious state). But this is only for beginners.

25 AUGUST - YOUR FOREMOST DUTY :CONCENTRATION

Sri Shankara writes that a man's duty consists in the control of the senses and the concentration of the mind. As long as one's thoughts are not thoroughly destroyed, through perisistent practice, a man should ever be concentrating his mind on one truth at a time. Through such unremitting practice, one-pointedness will accrue and instantly all the hosts of thoughts will vanish. Concentration is opposed to sensuous desires, bliss to flurry and worry, sustained thinking to perplexity, applied thinking to sloth and torpor and rapture to ill-will.

You are born to concentrate the mind on God after collecting the mental rays that are dissipated on various objects. This is your foremost duty, but you forget it on account of delusion for family, money, power, position, name and fame. Concentration of the mind on God after purification can give you real happiness and knowledge. You are born for this purpose only. Fix the mind on atman, the all-pervading. pure intelligence and self-luminous effulgence. Stand firm in Brahman, then you will become established in Brahman.

Attention plays a great part in concentration. It is the basis of will. The force with which anything strikes the mind is generally in proportion to the degree of attention bestowed on it. Attention on any object may be either subjective (internal) or objective (external). Practise concentrating your attention on unpleasant tasks, upon uninteresting objects and ideas. Then many mental weaknesses will vanish and the mind will become stronger and stronger.

Do a thing that the mind does not want to do. Do not do a thing that the mind wants to do. Don't fulfill your desires; don't hope; don't expect. Destroy vicious desires through virtuous desires and then destroy the virtuous desires also, through one strong desire for liberation. Practice of pranayama destroys rajas (activity) and tamas (dullness) and makes the mind steady and one-pointed.

26 AUGUST - THE PRACTICE OF CONCENTRATION

Fix the mind on some object, within the body or without. Keep it there, steadily, for some time. This is concentration. Practise this daily.

Ethical perfection is a matter of paramount importance. You can concentrate internally on any of the seven centres of spiritual energy. A man who is filled with passion and fantastic desires, can hardly concentrate at all, even for a second. His mind jumps around like a monkey.

Sit in the lotus pose. Gaze gently at the tip of the nose. Practise this for one minute in the beginning, gradually increasing it to half an hour. This steadies the mind and develops the power of concentration. Keep this up even as you walk about.

Or, sit in the lotus pose, fixing the mind between the eyebrows. Do this gently for half a minute. Gradually increase to half an hour or more. This removes tossing of the mind and develops concentration. Select either of these methods. If you want to increase your power of concentration, you will have to reduce your worldly activities. You will have to observe the vow of silence every day for two hours or more.

When the mind runs from an object, bring it back again and again. When concentration is deep and intense, the senses cannot operate. He who practises concentration for three hours a day will have tremendous psychic power and will power. You should steadily direct your gaze towards the tip of the nose (nasikagra drsti) and keep the mind fixed on the self only. In chapter five, verse 25 of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says: “Having made the mind abide in the self, let him not think of anything.” Another gaze is gazing between the eyebrows. Do not strain the eyes; practise gently.

When you practise concentration on the end of the nose, you will experience various sorts of fragrance. When you concentrate on the ajna cakra (eyebrow centre), you will experience divya jyoti (divine light). This will give you encouragement. It will push you up the spiritual path and convince you of the existenceof transcendental things. Do not stop your sadhana (practice) now.

27 AUGUST - THE FRUITS OF CONCENTRATION

Now hear about the fruits that one gains from this practice. Supreme joy is for the yogi whose mind is peaceful, whose passionate nature is calmed, who is sinless and of the nature of the eternal.

When one advances in the practice of concentration, when one takes a real interest in it and when one has realised some benefits, then he cannot leave the practice. Concentration brings supreme joy, spiritual inner strength, unalloyed felicity and infinite, eternal peace. It brings profound knowledge and deep inner sight, intuition and communion with God.

The vital point in concentration is to bring the mind to the same point or object, again and again, by limiting its movements. Limit it to a small circle to begin with - that is the main aim. A time will come when the mind will stick to one point alone. This is the fruit of protracted sadhana (practice). Now your joy will be indescribable.

Ifyou decide to meditate on the form of a chair, bring all thoughts connected with that chair together and dwell on these ideas. Do not allow thoughts of other objects to enter your mind. Thought should flow steadily, like oil flowing steadily from one vessel to another. Gradually reduce the number of ideas related to the object of concentration. When all these ideas die, you get the super-conscious state (samadhi).

When this last idea dies out and when there is not even a single idea, the mind becomes blank or void. There is mental vacuity. This is the stage of thoughtlessness referred to by Patanjali in his raja yoga philosophy. You must rise above this blank vritti (thought-form) and identify yourself with the supreme purusha or Brahman, the silent witness of the mind who gives power and light to the mind. Then and then alone you will reach the highest goal of life.

Prolonged meditation on the absolute leads to perfection. One of the greatest needs in spiritual life is meditation. Meditate and listen to the voice of God. This will give you strength and power and peace.

28 AUGUST - THE POWER OF CONCENTRATION

If you focus theraysofthesunthroughalens,theycanburncottonorapieceofpaper; but the scattered rays cannotdothis.Ifyouwanttotalktoamanatadistance,youmakeafunnel of your hand and speak;thesoundwavesarecollectedatonepointandthendirectedtowards the man. He can hear yourspeechveryclearly.Whenwaterisconvertedintosteamandthe steam is concentrated atapoint,therailwayenginemoves.Thesteaminthecookingvessels moves the lid and producesaput-putsound.Allthesearеinstancesofconcentratedwaves.Even so, if you collect the dissipatedraysofthemindandfocusthematapoint,youwillhave wonderful concentration. Theconcentratedmindwillserveisapotentsearch-lighttofindoutthe treasures of the soul and attainthesupremewealthofatman,eternalbliss,immortalityandperennial joy. Therefore practiseconcentrationandmeditationregularly.

Kumbhaka (retentionofbreath)helpsconcentration.Itchecksthevelocityofthemind and makes it move in smallercirclesandultimatelycurbsallitswanderings.Trataka(gazing)isa potent aid to concentration.Fixthemindonthecandleflame,orablackdot,orsivalinga(symbol of Siva), or saligrama(symbolofVishnu).Brahmacharya(celibacy)helpsconcentration. Without brahmacharyayoucannothavedefiniteprogress.Satvic(pure)foodisanother aid to concentration.Seclusion,mauna(silence),satsanga(holycompany),asana(yogaposture), japa (repetition ofGod’sname),practiceofyama,niyama,fasting,moderationindiet,non-mixing with persons, littletalking,littlewalking,littleexertion,areallaidstoconcentration.

The mind canbecontrolledbycontinuouspractice.Youmustalwayskeepitoccupied in divine contemplation.Ifyouslackenyourefforts,idlethoughtswillatonceoccur.Continuous practice only can bringthemindundercontrol.

If you wish toattainsuccessinyogayouwillhavetoabandonallworldlyenjoyments. You will have to practisebrahmacharyaandtapas(austerity).Thesewillhelpyouintheattainment of concentration and samadhi (superconsciousness).

29 AUGUST - TRATAKA

Tratakaissteadygazing.WritethewordOminblackonthewall.Concentrateonitwithopen eyes tilltearscomeintheeyes.Thenclosetheeyes;visualisethepictureofOm.Thenopenthe eyes andagaingazetilllachrymationmanifests.Graduallyincreasetheperiod.Therearestudents who cangazeforonehour.Tratakaisoneofthesadkriyas(sixexercises)inhathayoga.Trataka steadiesthewanderingmindandremovesvikshepa(tossingofthemind).Insteadofgazingat Om youmaygazeatabigblackdotonthewall.Thewallswillpresentagoldencolourduring trataka. You candotratakaonanypictureoftheLord,eitherofKrishna,Rama,orSivaoronSaligrama. You cansitonthechairalso.Fixthepictureonthewallinfrontofyoureyes.Tratakaisthealpha-beta ofconcentration.Itisthefirstexerciseforyogicstudentsinconcentration.

Tratakawithopeneyesisfollowedbyvisualisation.Visualisationiscallingupofaclearmental imageofanything.Practisetratakaforoneminuteonthefirstday.Thengraduallyincreasethe periodeveryweek.Doitgentlywitheaseandcomfort,aslongasyoucan.Repeatyourmantra, duringtrataka.Insomepeoplewhohaveweakcapillaries,theeyesmaybecomered.Theyneed not bealarmedunnecessarily.Therednessoftheeyeswillpassquickly.

Practisetratakaforsixmonthsthenyoucantakeupadvancedlessonsinconcentrationand meditation.Beregularandsystematicinyoursadhana(practice).Ifthereisabreakmakeupthe deficiencyorlossonthenextday.Tratakaremovesmanyeyediseasesandultimatelybringsin siddhis (psychic powers).

PlaceapictureofLordJesusinfrontofyou.Sitinyourfavouritemeditativepose.Concentrate gentlywithopeneyesonthepicturetilltearstrickledownthecheeks.Rotatethemindonthe cross,onthechest,longhair,beautifulbeard,roundeyes,andthevariousotherlimbsofhisbody, and finespiritualauraemanatingfromhishead,andsoon.Thinkofhisdivineattributes,various phasesofhisinterestinglifeandthe‘miracles’heperformedandthevariousextraordinary powershepossessed.Thenclosetheeyesandtrytovisualisethepicture.Repeatthesame process again and again.

30 AUGUST - DEVELOP YOUR PERCEPTION

Organs deteriorate if you do not use them properly - just as hands and legs are atrophied by disuse and are developed by muscular exercise, etc. There is intimate connection between sight and memory, and between hearing and memory.

He who has acute sight, keen perception, good powers of observation and hearing - he will have a good memory. In the internal astral body there are counterparts of these. They are called astral senses. A yogi hears through astral ears and sees through astral eyes. Thus he can hear sounds from distant lands, he can see objects in distant localities. This is called clairvoyance and clairaudience.

Generally people are very careless. They have no wish to learn higher things and have a fund of knowledge. Keep a watch very close to the ear; hear the sound attentively. On the second day put the watch a little further away. Listen to the tick-tick sound. Every day increase the distance, training yourself to hear the sound. Then plug one ear with the index finger of your hand. Train the ears alternately.

Here is another exercise.Closeboth ears through yonimudra; try to hear the anahata sounds that emanate from the heartlotus.You will hear ten varieties of sounds, such as: flute, mridanga, veena, conch, bells, thunder,humming of a bee, drum, etc. Allow the organ of hearing (ear) to shift from one sound toanotherand carefully differentiate the various sounds. Eventually fix the ear on one sound. Try thegrosssounds first and then go to the subtle sounds.

There is another exercise.Fixtheears on the pranava dhvani (Om sound) that emanates from a river, ocean or wind. It willbeheard like ‘bhum’ or a long ‘Om’. Train your ears to hear this sound. Do this exercise at 4 a.m.orat9p.m. when the noise of the town has died down. Keep your ears keen. Differentiate the soundsofvarious kinds of birds, beasts, children, factories, motor cars, aeroplanes, cycles, shrieks,yells,snores, sobbing, crying, laughing, mocking, joking, etc.

The mind may be there,theinstrument may be perfect, but if the mind is not functioning perfectly, you cannot seeorhearproperly. Perception is possible only when the mind is linked with the external instrument(ear,eye, etc.).

31 AUGUST - HEARTICULTURE

You must have a pure mindifyouwanttorealisetheself.Unlessthemindissetfree,unlessthe mind casts away all desire,craving,worry,delusion,pride,lust,attachment,likesanddislikes,it cannot enter the domainofsupremepeace.

Mind is comparedtoagarden.Justasyoucancultivategoodflowersandfruitsinagarden,by ploughingandmanuringtheland,byremovingtheweedsandthorns,andbywateringtheplants and trees-sotooyoucancultivatetheflowerofdevotioninthegardenofyourmind,byremoving the impuritiesofthemind(suchaslust,anger,greed,delusion,pride,etc.),andwateringitwith divine thoughts.

Weedsandthornsgrowintherainyseasonandthendisappearinsummer.Buttheirseedsremain underneaththegroundandassoonasthereisashower,theseedsgerminateandsprout.Even so, thevrittis(modificationsofthemind),manifestonthesurfaceoftheconsciousmind,then disappearandassumeasubtleseed-stateintheformofsamskarasorimpressions.Thesamskaras again become vrittis, either through internal or external stimuli.

If youwanttokeepthegardencleanyouwillhavetoremovenotonlytheweedsbutalsothe seedsthatlieunderneaththeground,whichwilleventuallygerminateotherwise.Evenso,you havetodestroynotonlythebigwavesofthemind,butalsotheimpressionswhicharetheseeds for birthanddeath,ifyouwanttoenterthesuperconsciousstate.

Those whohaveremovedtheimpuritiesoftheirmindsbyjapa(repetitionofGod’sname), service, charity,pranayama(yogabreathing),etc.,willenterintomeditationassoonastheysit for meditation.Thepure,ripemindatonceburnswiththefireofmeditation.Withoutthehelp of meditationyoucannotobtainknowledgeoftheself.Withoutitsaidyoucannotgrowintothe divine state.Withoutityoucannotliberateyourselffromthetrammelsofthemindandattain immortality.Teartheveilthatcoversthesoul,bypractisingregularmeditation.

Self-realisationistheaimoflife.Themeanstoitarelivinganethicallifeandceaselessmeditation.

Spiritual dutyisfarmoreimportantthanworldlyduty.LivetoseekGod.Livetoservehumanity.

Fulfill God’s will.Youwillbeblessed.Youwillbehappy.

1 SEPTEMBER - MEDITATION

If you want to get rid of thepainsandafflictionsofthissamsara(worldlylife)youmustpractise meditation. Meditation is thepathwaytodivinity.Itistheroyalroadtothekingdomof Brahman. It is a mysterious ladder whichreachesfromerrortotruth,fromdarknesstolight,frompainto bliss, from restlessness toabidingpeace,fromignorancetowisdom,frommortalityto immortality. Meditation leadstoknowledgeoftheself,toeternalpeace,supremebliss. Meditation prepares you fordirectintuitiveknowledge.

Truth is Brahman. Truth is self.Youcannotrealisethetruthwithoutreflectionandmeditation.Be silent. Know thyself. Melt themindinthat.Withoutmeditationyoucannotliberateyourselffrom the trammels of the mind andattainimmortality.Teartheveilsthatcoverthesoul.Rendasunder the five sheaths that screen theatman(self)byconstantmeditation.Youwillfindfinalbeatitude. Meditation is a powerful tonic.Theholyvibrationspenetrateallthecellsofthebodyandcureall its diseases. The powerful soothingwavesthatariseduringmeditationexerciseabenigninfluence over the mind and the nerves.Ifyoumeditateforhalfanhouryouwillbeabletoengageyourself with peace and spiritual strengthinthedailybattleoflife,foraweek.Youdothisjustthrough the force of this one meditation.

A yogi who meditates regularlyhasamagnetic,charmingpersonality.Thosewhocomeincontact with him are much influencedbyhissweetvoice,hispowerfulspeech,hislustrouseyes,his brilliant complexion, his stronghealthybody,hisgoodbehaviour,hisvirtuousqualitiesanddivine nature. People draw peaceandjoyandstrengthfromhim.

Close your lips. Shut thedoorsofthesenses.Meditateonatman(self).Youwillenjoypeaceand bliss.. The more you growinaspirationandmeditation,themoreyougrowGod-like.Forin meditation is the light oftheLord.

Meditate and charge yourbatterybycontactwithGod.Divedeepinthechambersofyourheart through profound and silentmeditation,andbringupthepearloftruth.

2 SEPTEMBER - THE SECRET OF MEDITATION

Meditation is the road to the attainment of salvation (moksha). Meditation kills all pains, suffering the three kinds of tapas (fevers), and the five kleshas (sorrows). Meditation gives the vision of unity. Meditation produces a sense of oneness. Meditation is the aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high in the realms of eternal bliss and everlasting peace.

Meditation is the mysterious ladder that connects heaven and earth and takes the aspirant to the immortal abode of Brahman. Meditation is the continuous flow of one thought of God or atman, like the continuous flow of oil from one vessel to another.

When you sit for meditation, all sorts of worldly thoughts will crop up in your mind; this will disturb the meditation. You will be astonished. Old thoughts, old memories of past enjoyments will bubble up and force the mind to wander in all directions. The trap-door of the vast magazine of thoughts and memories, within the subconscious mind, is opened up and these thoughts gush out in a continuous stream. The more you attempt to still them, the more they will bubble up.

Do not be discouraged. Never despair. Through regular and constant meditation you will purify the sub-conscious mind and thus control the thoughts and memories. The fire of meditation will burn all thoughts. Be sure of this.

Meditation on the immortal self will act like dynamite. It will blow up all thoughts and memories in the sub-conscious mind. If the thoughts trouble you much, do not suppress them by force. Be a silent witness, as in a bioscope. They will subside gradually. Then you must root them out by regular silent meditation.

The practice of meditation must be constant. Then only will one attain self realisation, quickly and surely. He who practises meditation, by fits and starts, for a few minutes daily, will not be able to achieve any tangible success in yoga.

In the beginning, beginners fall down from meditation into their old grooves. They must lift up their minds again and again. They will have to fix the mind on the Lakshya(target). When the meditation becomes deep and steady, they eventually get established in God. Then meditation becomes Sahaja- it becomes habitual.

3 SEPTEMBER - SELF-EFFORT AND GRACE IN MEDITATION

You needacalm,clear,pure,subtle,steady,sharpone-pointedbuddhi(intellect)tounderstand the realityofBrahman.Onlythenisrealizationpossible.Onlyatrainedmindwhichutterly controlsthebody,canenquireandmeditateaslongasliferemains,neverlosingsightofthe object of its search and never letting it be obscured by any terrestrial temptations.

Energyiswastedinuselessidletalkandgossiping,planningandunnecessaryworrying.Conserve energybygettingridofthesethreedefectsandutiliseitinmeditation.Thenyoucandowonderful meditation.Hewhosaysandimaginesthathepractisesdeepmeditationdaily,whenhehasnot removedtheeviltraitsofthemind,deceiveshimselffirstandthenothers.Heisafirstclass hypocrite.

If you strainyourselfinmeditationandgobeyondyourcapacity,thenlazinessandinactivenature will supervene.Meditationshouldcomenaturallyonaccountofserenityofmind,inducedby practice ofsama,dama,uparatiandpratyahara(controlofmindandsenses,non-pursuitof pleasure andintroversionofattention).Atman(self)isthefountainofenergy.Thinkingonatman or the sourceofenergy,alsoisadynamicmethodofaugmentingenergy,strengthandpower. Divine energyflowsfreelyfromthefeetoftheLordtothedifferentsystemsoftheaspirantand new nerve currents,newgrooves,newcellsareformed.Themindandnervoussystemare remodeled andyouwilldevelopanewheart.

Conserve energybytalkinglittle,observingmauna(silence),controllinganger,observing brahmacharya (celibacy),practisingpranayama(yogabreathing)andcontrollingirrelevantand non-essential thoughts.Meditateandbeholdtheimperishableatman.Restyourselffirmlyinthe self. Nothing can hurtyounow.Youcanbecomeinvincible.

In contemplation, youareinspiritualcontactwithunchanginglight;youarecleansedofall impurities. If you haveanopenheart,devotedlylifteduptoGod,thelightofhispurityandlove will consume all yourshort-comings.Thispurifyingprocessleadstoadeeperinsightintotruth. This is the action of thegraceoftheLorduponthesoulinmeditation.Inthisinflowinggracethere arises that light of themindintowhichGodissendingtherayofhisuncloudedsplendour.

4 SEPTEMBER - STAGES IN THAT PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

In the beginning you can meditate twice daily, from 4 to 6 in the morning and 7 to 8 at night. As you advance in your practices, you can increase the duration of each sitting, little by little, using your common sense and discretion, and also have a third sitting either in the morning between 10 and 11 or in the evening between 4 and 5.

In the Yoga Vasishta you will find: "The right course to be adopted by one who is in his novitiate is this: Two parts of the mind must be filled with the objects of enjoyment, one part with philosophy and the remaining part with devotion to the teacher. Having advanced a little, he should fill one part of the mind with the objects of enjoyment. two parts with devotion to the teacher and the remaining one part with getting an insight into the meaning of philosophy. When one has attained proficiency, he should every day fill two parts with meditation and the other two with devoted service to the guru. This will eventually lead you on to meditation for twenty-four hours."

Sitting in your favourite meditative pose and keeping the head and trunk erect, close your eyes and gently concentrate on either the tip of the nose, space between the two eyebrows, the heart lotus or the crown of the head. When once you have selected one centre of concentration, stick to it till the last with leech-like tenacity. Meditation is of two kinds, namely, saguna (with gunas or qualities) and nirguna (without gunas or qualities). Meditation on Lord Krishna, Lord Siva, Lord Rama or Lord Jesus is saguna meditation. It is meditation with form and attributes. The name of the Lord is also simultaneously repeated. This is the method of the devotees. Meditation on the reality of the self is nirguna meditation. This is the method of the vedantins. Meditation on Om, Soham, Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi and Tat Twam Asi is nirguna meditation.

Ifyou want to keep the mind charged with the fire of Brahmic wisdom, you must always keep it incontact with the Brahmic fire of knowledge, through constant and intense meditation.

5 SEPTEMBER - LISTEN TO THE MYSTIC SOUND

Sit in padma asana or siddha asana. Practise yoni mudra by closing the ears with the thumbs. Hear the internal sound through the right ear. The sound which you will hear will make you deaf to all external sounds. Having overcome all obstacles you will enter the turiya state within fifteen days. In the beginning you may hear many loud sounds. Then try to hear more and more subtle sounds.

The mind having first concentrated itself on any one sound, fixes firmly to that and is absorbed in it. The mind becomes insensible to external impressions and becomes one with the sound. Being indifferent to all objects and having controlled the passions, you should, by continual practice concentrate your mind upon the sound which destroys the mind.

Having abandoned all thoughts and being freed from all actions, you should always concentrate your whole attention on the sound and then the chitta (mind) becomes absorbed in it. Just as the bee, drinking the honey alone, does not care for the odour, so the chitta, which is always absorbed in sound does not long for sensual objects - it is bound by the sweet nada (sound) and has abandoned its flitting nature.

The serpent chitta, through listening to the nada, is entirely absorbed in it and, becoming unconscious of everything, concentrates itself on the sound. The sound serves the purpose of a sharp goad to control the maddened elephant chitta, which roves in the pleasure garden of the sensual objects.

The sound proceeding fromthepranava (Om) is Brahman. It is of the nature of effulgence. It is the seat of Vishnu. The mindexists so long as there is sound but, with its cessation, there is that state termed turiya. Being freedfrom all states and all thoughts, you will remain like one dead. The body is like a log. It doesnotfeel heat or cold, joy or sorrow.

When spiritual sight is fixed-without any object to be seen - when prana (life force) becomes still - without any effort - whenthechitta becomes firm - without any support - you become Brahman. When manas (mind) is destroyed, when virtues and sins are burned away, you shine as the effulgent, immaculate, eternal,stainless Brahman.

6 SEPTEMBER - EXERCISES IN MEDITATION

Keep a picture of Lord Krishna with a flute in his hands. Sit in your meditative pose and gently concentrate on this picture until you shed tears. Think of his feet, adorned with anklets. Think of his yellow silken garment. Think of the ornaments around his neck. Think of the long garland of beautiful flowers of various colours. Think of his ear-rings and the crown set with precious jewels he wears on his head. Think of the long dark hair, the sparkling eyes and the tilaka (mark) on the forehead. Think of the magnetic aura around his head. Think of his arms and hands, adorned with armlets and bracelets. Think of the flute, ready in his hands, waiting for him to play it. Then close your eyes and visualise this picture mentally. Repeat this process again and again.

This is one kind of meditation and is suitable for beginners. Sit in padmasana in your meditation room. Close the eyes. Meditate on the effulgence in the sun, or the splendour in the moon, or the glory of the stars.

There is a living universal power that underlies all these names and forms. Meditate on this power, which is formless. This will terminate in the realisation of the absolute, nirguna (attributeless), nirakara (formless) consciousness eventually.

Sit in your meditative pose. Close your eyes. Imagine that there is a supreme, infinite effulgence hidden behind all these names and forms, tantamount to the effulgence of millions of suns put together. This is also a form of nirguna meditation.

Concentrate and meditate on the expansive blue sky. By the previous methods of concentration the mind will cease thinking of finite forms. It will slowly begin to melt in the ocean of peace as it is deprived of its contents. Thus the mind will become subtler and subtler.

Concentrate on the picture of Om in front of you, Do this with open eyes until the tears flow profusely. Associate the ideas of eternity, infinity, immortality, etc., with Om.

The humming of bees, the sweet notes of the nightingale and all other sounds emanate from Om only. Om is the essence of allthe vedas (scriptures).

7 SEPTEMBER - IMPORTANCE OF OM

Brahman is the highest of all. Om is his name. Om is also your real name. It covers the threefold experiences of man. From Om this sense world has been projected. The world exists in Om and dissolves in Om.

Om is the greatest of all mantras (mystic formula). Om bestows direct liberation. All mantras begin with Om. Om is the life, the soul, of all mantras. Every Upanishad begins with Om. Oblations that are offered to the various gods are all preceded by Om.

All languages, all sounds, come out of Om. The essence of the four vedas is Om. A - U - M covers the whole range of sound vibrations. A starts from the root of the tongue, U proceeds from the middle and M comes from the end, by closing the lips.

Om is the source of all religions and scriptures. This sacred monosyllable is the means of liberation from the bonds of matter. It leads one, stage by stage, to the highest bliss. It is fit for the lowest as well as for the highest and most advanced intellect. It is fit for the Brahmachari (celibate-student) as well as the sanyasin (monk). It is fit for any condition.

Om is your birthright. It is the common heritage of all. It is the word of power. It fills the devotee with spiritual strength, vigour and energy when chanted with harmony and rhythm. It brings inspiration and intuition.

It elevates the mind. It is a spiritual food and tonic. It is full of divine potency. Live in Om. Meditate on Om. Inhale Om. Exhale Om. Rest peacefully in Om. Take shelter in Om. May that Om guide you.

Om stands for all phenomenal worlds. From Om this sense universe has been projected. Om has been formed by adding the letters A-U-M; A represents the physical world; U represents the mental and the astral planes, the world of spirits, all heavens; and M represents the deep sleep state and, even in the waking state, all that is unknown, beyond reach of the intellect. Om therefore represents all. It is the basis of your life, thought and intelligence. All words that denote objects are centred in Om - hence the whole world has come from Om, rests in Om and dissolves in Om.

8 SEPTEMBER - SIVANANDA GITA

I was born of P.S. Vengu Aiyar and Parvathiammal on 8th September 1887 at Pattamadai, Tirunelvely District, S. India, in the line of Appayya Dixit. My star is Bharani.

Iwas extremely mischievous in my boyhood. I studied in the S.P.G. College, Trichy. I was a Doctor inMalaya States for 10 years. I took Sanyasa in 1924 in Rishikesh. I did tapas and meditation for 15years. I went on lecturing tours for 10 years. I founded the Divine Life Society in 1936 and the All-World Religions Federation in 1945.

I am child-like in my svabhava. So I mix with all. I become one with all.

I am ever happy and joyful and make others also happy and joyful. I am full of educative humour. I radiate joy through humour. I respect all. I do salutations to all first. I always speak sweetly. I walk quickly.

I do japa and meditation while walking and while at work also. I am ever hard-working. I have intense application to work. I never leave a work till it is finished. I never procrastinate any work. I finish it then and there. I am very quick in doing things.

I cannot suppress the spirit of service in me. I cannot live without service. I take immense delight in service. Service has elevated me. Service has purified me. I know well how to extract work from others. I extract work through kindness, service, respect and love.

I am very regular in doing asanas and exercises. I even now do sirshasan, sarvangasan and other asanas. I do pranayama also regularly. These give me wonderful health and energy. I run round the bhajan hall daily.

I cannot deliver fiery lectures sitting on a special seat. Special seat pricks me. I stand up or throw the seat away and then begin to speak. I never sat on a special seat when I presided over spiritual conferences.

Irejoice in giving. I always give.

9 SEPTEMBER - SIVANANDA GITA (CONTINUED)

I am 59 (1946) now. I ever feel I am quite young. I am full of vigour, vim and vitality. I am ever cheerful. I sing, dance, run, and jump in joy. I am robust and strong. I can digest any kind of food.

I continuously work, read and write. I never go to hill stations or seaside for a holiday. Change of work gives rest. Meditation gives abundant rest. Work gives me delight. Service gives me happiness. Writing bestows joy. Meditation energises and invigorates me. Kirtan vivifies me.

"Aham Brahmasmi, Sivoham, Soham, Satchidananda Swaroopoham" - This is my favourite formula for vedantic meditation.

Hare Rama hare Rama Rama Rama hare hare Hare Krishna hare Krishna Krishna Krishna hare hare.

This mahamantra kirtan is my favourite kirtan.

At the present moment I am the richest man in the whole world. My heart is full. Further, all the wealth of the Lord belongs to me now. Hence I am king of kings, emperor of emperors, shah of shahs, maharaja of maharajas. I take pity on the mundane kings. My dominion is limitless. My wealth is inexhaustible.

My joy is inexpressible. My treasure is immeasurable. I attained this through sanyasa, renunciation, untiring selfless service, japa, kirtan and meditation. I am tall. My height is 6 feet. I have a sinewy frame. I have symmetrical limbs. I was a first class gymnast. I fast on Ekadasi. I do not take even a drop of water. I take milk and fruits on Sundays. I do not take salt on Sundays.

I lead a simple natural life. There is a fountain of youth in me. I beam with joy. I observe fasting, resting, airing, bathing, breathing, exercising, sun-bathing and enjoy freedom, power, beauty, courage, poise and health.

Om. Om. Om.

10 SEPTEMBER - SIVANANDA GITA (CONTINUED)

I love nature, music, art, poetry, philosophy, beauty, goodness, solitude, meditation, yoga and vedanta. I am humble and simple. I am frank and straightforward. I am perfectly tolerant and catholic. I am merciful and sympathetic. I have spontaneous and unrestrained generosity.

I am bold and cheerful. I am patient. I can bear insult and injury. I am forgiving. I am free from vindictive nature. I return good for evil. I serve that man who has injured me, with joy.

I love Ganga and the Himalayas. Ganga is my mother divine. Himalayas is my father divine. They inspire and guide me. I take bath in Ganga. I swim in Ganga. I adore Ganga. I feed the fishes of Ganga. I wave light to Mother Ganges. I pray to Ganga. I do salutations to Ganga. I sing the glory of Ganga. I write about the grandeur and glory of Ganga.

Ganga has nourished me. Ganga has comforted me. Ganga has taught me the truth of the Upanishads. Glory to Ganga! My daily routine is like that of Lord Buddha. I always remain in the room. I do japa, kirtan and meditation. I study sacred books. I write. I come out of the room for a short time for work, service and interview.

I talk a little. I think much. I meditate much. I try to do much and serve much. I do not waste even a single minute. I ever keep myself fully occupied. I lead a well-regulated life. I perform worship of atman at all times. I work for the good of others. Om. Om. Om.

Gita, Upanishads, Bhagavat, Yoga Vasishta, Avadhootha Gita, Vivekachudamani are my constant companions.

I am a strange mixture of service, devotion, yoga and wisdom. I am a follower of Sri Sankara. I am a Keval-Advaita vedantin. I am not at all a dry lip-vedantin. I am a practical vedantin.

I practise and advocate the yoga of synthesis. I practise ahimsa, satyam and brahmacharya. Glory to Sri Sankara!

11 SEPTEMBER - SIVANANDA GITA (CONTINUED)

I respect all saints and prophets of all religions. I respect all religions, all cults, all faiths and all creeds.

I serve all, love all,mixwithallandseetheLordinall. I stick to my promises. I serve the poor. This is my delight. I domentalprostrationstoasses,dogs, trees, bricks, stones and all creatures. I respect elders andsadhus.Iobey.Ipleaseallthrough sincere selfless service.

I attend on guestsverycarefully.Irunhitherandthither to serve them. I shampoo the legs of sick persons and sadhus.Igiveverypromptreplytoallmy letters. I do several things at a time. I write with electric speed.

I spend everything.Idolotofcharity.Idonotkeep anything. I take immense delight in feeding the poor and mystudents.Itrytobeamothertothem. I talk to others on things which I have myself practised.Ilookwithinalways,introspect,analyse, and examine. I hold the trisul, spiritual diary, daily routineandresolve.

I ever servedmymasterswithgreatsincerityandintense faith and devotion. I learnt many useful lessons forlife.Idevelopedmanyvirtues.

I wanderedwithoutfoodduringmyparivrajaklife.Islept on the roadside at night without clothing during winter.Iatedriedbreadwithwater.Isticktenaciously to my principles and ideals. I do not argue much.Iliveinsilence.

I pray anddokirtanforthepeaceofthewholeworld, for the health and peace of sick people, and for thepeaceofthedepartedsoulsandtheearth bound spirits also.

I take a dipintheGangesinthenameofallthosewho are longing for a bath in the Ganges. I sing the namesofallsaintsofallreligionsinthebhajanhall. I observe All Saints day and All-Souls day. Om. Om. Om.

12SEPTEMBER-SIVANANDA GITA (CONTINUED)

I constantly meditateonthefollowing:

Prajnanam Brahman,ahambrahmasmi,tattvam asi, ayam atma brahman.
Satyam jnanamanantambrahman,santamsivam advaitam.
Aham atma Gudakesa.Ahamatmanirvikarah sarvavyapi svabhavatah.
Brahma satyamjaganmityajivobrahmaivana parah.
Akarta, abhokta,asanga,sakshi,ajonityahsasvatoyam purano.
Jyotisamapi tat jyotih.

To raisethefallen,toleadtheblind,toshare what I have with others, to bring solace to the afflicted,tocheeruptheSufferingaremy ideals. To have perfect faith in God, to love my neighbourasmyownself,toloveGodwith all my heart and soul, to protect cows, animals, womenandchildrenaremyaims.Mywatchword is love. My goal is sahaja samadhi avasta or the natural, continuous, superconscious state.

SONG OFJOY.

Om OmOmOm-OmOmOmOm
Om OmOmOmOm-OmOmOmOm
Om OmOmOmOm
Om OmOmOmOmOm-OmOmOmOmOm
Om Om.

Within you is hidden God
Within you is immortal soul

Kill this little "I"
Die to live
Lead the divine life.

Within you is the fountain of joy
Within you is the ocean of bliss.

Rest peacefully,inyourownatma
And drink the nectarofimmortality.

13 SEPTEMBER - PHILOSOPHY OF OM

The sound produced in the flowing of the river Ganges, the sound that is heard at a distance, the sound that proceeds from the bustle of the market, that is produced by the fly-wheel when it is set in motion, that is caused when it rains, or there is a conflagration, or thunder - it is all Om only. Split any word and you will find. Om there. Om is all-pervading, like akasa (space), like Brahman, the absolute.

Om is the symbol of Brahman. It is the word of power. It is the sacred monosyllable. It is the essence of the vedas. It is the boat to take you across to the other shore of fearlessness and immortality.

The word Om is themostappropriatenameofBrahman. By its application, by its chanting, he becomes propitiatedOmisemblematicofBrahman, as images are of material objects. When you hear the sound 'tree'.youatonceunderstandithas a root, a stem, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc. Similarlytoo,whenyouhearthesabda(sound) Om it denotes satchidananda Brahman - existence absolute,knowledgeabsolute,blissabsolute.

Sabda (word)andartha(meaning)areinseparable. All collections of words (speech), terminate in one sound-Om.Allobjectsaredenotedbysounds, and all sounds merge in Om. The whole universe comesoutofOmandisabsorbedintoOm. Hence Om is very important. Om should be worshipped.Omshouldbechantedloudly.Omshould be repeated mentally, with deep meaning and feeling.Omshouldbemeditatedupon.

Watch thebreath.Whenyouinhale,thesoundsois produced. When you exhale, the sound ham is produced.Youarenaturallyutteringsoham-Iam he - or - he am I - with every breath. The breath remindsyouthatyouareinessenceidentical with the supreme self.

In soham thesandthehareconsonants.Ifyoudelete them you get oam or om. Consonants depend on vowelsfortheirexistence.Sandhrepresent names and forms, or this universe which is phenomenalorrelativeorempiricalordependent existence. Om is the only solid reality. Om is the soul of yourbreath.

As soon as yousitformeditationchantOmloudly, three, six or twelve times. This drives away worldly thoughtsfromthemindandremovesvikshep (tossing of the mind). Later you may take to the mental repetitionofOm.

14 SEPTEMBER - INSTRUCTIONS IN MEDITATION

Just as the light is burning within the hurricane lamp, so also the divine flame is burning from time immemorial in the lamp of your heart. Close your eyes. Merge yourself within the divine flame. Plunge deep into the chambers of your heart. Meditate on this divine flame and become one with the flame of God.

If the wick within the lamp is small, the light will also be small. If the wick is big, the light also will be powerful. Similarly if the jiva (individual soul) is pure, if he practises meditation, the manifestation of the self will be powerful. He will radiate a big light. Likewise the purer the soul, the greater the expression.

If the magnet is powerful, it will influence the iron filings even when they are placed at a distance. Even so, if the yogi is an advanced person, he will have greater influence over the persons with whom he comes in contact. He can exert his influence on persons even when they live in distant places.

During meditation note how long you can shut out all worldly thoughts. Watch the mind. Try to increase the period. Fill the mind with thoughts of God again and again.

In meditation do not strain the eyes. Do not strain the brain. Do not struggle or wrestle with the mind. Relax. Gently allow divine thoughts to flow. Steadily think of lakshya (point of meditation). Do not voluntarily and violently drive away the intruding thoughts. Have sublime (satvic) thoughts. The vicious thoughts will vanish by themselves.

If there is much strain in your meditation reduce the duration of each sitting for a few days. Those who meditate for four or five hours at a stretch can have two meditative poses. Keep the spine erect.

You must daily increase your vairagya (dispassion) and meditation on satvic virtues such as patience, perseverance, mercy, love and forgiveness. Vairagya and good qualities help meditation. Meditation increases the satvic qualities .

15 SEPTEMBER - THE GLIMPSE AND THE GOAL

When you get a flash of illumination, do not be frightened. It will be a new experience of immense joy. Do not turn back. Do not give up meditation. Do not stop there. You will have to advance still further. This is only a glimpse of truth. This is not the whole experience. This is not the highest realisation. This is only a new platform. Try to ascend further. Reach the bhuma (the infinite). Now alone you are proof against all temptation. You will drink deep the nectar of immortality. This is the acme or final state. You can take eternal rest now. You need not meditate any further. This is the final goal.

You have within yourself tremendous powers and latent faculties of which you have really never had any conception. You must awaken these dormant powers and faculties by the practice of meditation and yoga. You must develop your will and control your senses and mind. You must purify yourself and practise regular meditation, then only can you become a superman or God man.

Every human being has within himself various potentialities and capacities. He is a magazine of power and knowledge. As he evolves he unfolds new powers, new faculties, new qualities. Now he can change his environment and influence others. He can subdue others' minds. He can conquer internal and external nature. He can enter into superconscious state.

The wise cut asunder the knot of egoism by the sharp sword of constant meditation. Then dawns supreme knowledge of the self or full illumination or self-realisation. The liberated sage has neither doubt nor delusion. All bonds of karma (action) are rent asunder. This is the master-key to open the realms of eternal bliss. It may be tiring in the beginning, because the mind will be running away from the point (laksya) every now and then. But after some time it will be focused in the centre. You will be immersed in divine bliss.

16 SEPTEMBER - ON SECLUSION

As the will power in many persons has become very weak, as they had no religious discipline or training in schools and colleges when they were young, and as they are under the sway of materialistic influences, it is necessary for them to go in for seclusion for some weeks, months or years, to practise rigorous japa (repetition of God's name) and undisturbed meditation.

Calm the bubbling emotions, sentiments, instincts and impulses through silent meditation. You can give a new orientation to your feelings by systematic practice. You can entirely transmute your worldly nature into divine nature. You can exercise supreme control over the nerve centres, the nerves, the muscles, the five koshas (sheaths), emotions, impulses and instincts through meditation.

Those who have fixed up their sons in life, who have retired from service and those who have no ties in the world can remain in seclusion for four or five years and practise intense meditation and tapas (austerity) for purification and self-realisation. When they have attained self-knowledge, they should come out and share their knowledge and bliss with others. They should disseminate knowledge of the self through lectures, conversations, discourses or heart-to-heart talks.

Ahouse-holder (grhasta) with yogic tendencies and spiritual inclinations can practise meditation ina solitary and quiet room in his own house, Or in any solitary place on the banks of any holy river, during holidays or throughout the year if he is a whole-time aspirant or if he is retired from service.

The aspirant should be free from hope, desire and greed. Then only will he have a steady mind. Hope, desire and greed make the mind ever restless and turbulent; they are the enemies of peace and self-knowledge. He should not have many possessions. He can keep only those articles which are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his body. If there are many possessions the mind will be ever thinking of the articles and attempting to protect them. Those who want quick progress in meditation during seclusion should not keep any connection with the world by way of correspondence, reading newspapers or thinking of the family members and possessions.

17 SEPTEMBER - YOGA OF MEDITATION

O beloved Ram! You are within a strong fortress now. A spiritual fortress where no temptation can influence you. You are absolutely safe. Now you can do vigorous sadhana (spiritual practice)

without fear.Killthefoe-themind.Wearthespiritual laurels of peace, equal-vision and contentment.

You arealreadyshiningwithBrahmicbliss.Theall-merciful Lord has given you all sorts of comforts,goodhealthandagurutoguideyou.What more do you want? Grow. Evolve. Realise the truthandproclaimiteverywhere.

Be silent.Knowthyself.Knowthat.Meltthemindinthat. Truth is quite clear and simple. Solitude and intensemeditationaretwoimportantrequisitesfor self-realisation. If sadhana is interrupted, make upthedeficiencylater.

Practiseself-restraintatalltimesbecause,allofasudden, the senses may suddenly become turbulent.ThisiswhyKrishnasays:"OsonofKunti,the excited senses of even a wise man, though he be striving, impetuously carry away his mind."

Thewanderinghabitofthemindmustbecontrolled by making it stick to one place, by one methodofsadhana,byoneguruandbyoneformofyoga. A rolling stone gathers no moss. When youtakeupabookforstudy,youmustfinishitbefore you take up another one. When you take upanywork,youmustdevoteyourwhole-heartedattention towards it and finish it before you take up any other work.

Donotcausepainorsufferingtoanylivingbeing,whether through greed, selfishness, irritability orannoyance.Giveupangerandill-will.Giveupthespirit of fighting and heated debates. Do not argue.Ifyouquarrelwithsomebodyyoucannotmeditate for three or four days, because your balanceofmindisupset.Thusmuchenergyiswasted in useless channels. Also the blood becomeshot;thenervesareshattered.Keepaserene mind always. Meditation proceeds from a serene mind.

An aspirantmustbesensitiveandyetpossessabody and nerves completely under control. The greater thesensitivitybecomes,themoredifficultthe task. Noises which pass unnoticed by an ordinary personaretorturetoonewhoisverysensitive. Develop the inner power of the self. Centralisationofideaswillstoptheout-goinghabitof the mind.

18 SEPTEMBER - SAMADHI

Still the waves of themindandhold it steady in nirvikalpa samadhi (unconditioned state of superconsciousness).Thisneedsconstant, protracted practice of meditation. There may be breaks in the meditationinthebeginning but practice, makes you perfect. Later you will be able to remain absorbedinmeditationfor long periods. You can merge yourself in samadhi, with a mind like a flameprotectedfromwind.

Before gettingsanguinesuccessinmeditation get victory over the pose first. Sit upon your seat with the steadinessofarock-fortwo or three hours. If the body is steady then the mind will also be steady.

Do notmistakealittleconcentration or one-pointedness of mind for samadhi. Simply because you haverisenalittleabovebodyconsciousness, on account of a little concentration, do not think that youhaveattainedsamadhi.

Separatethemindfromthebodyand unite it with the supreme self. This is known as samadhi or the superconsciousstate.Thiswillgive liberation or freedom from births and deaths. Samadhi is obtainedbypracticeforalongtimeand with zeal and enthusiasm.

Samadhiisthehighestgoalwhichone can attain through meditation. It is not a little thing that can beattainedthroughalittlepractice. To attain samadhi one should observe strict brahmacharya(celibacy),dieticrestrictions and one must have purity of heart.

If these arenotattainedthereisno possibility of attaining samadhi. These are preliminary qualificationsandshouldbewellgrasped. Then only one should try to enter the portals of samadhi. Nonecanenterthereunless he is a great devotee of the Lord.

Moksha (liberation)islossofone'spersonality in the divine. It is deliverance from the delusion of personality. Just astheriverbecomes the ocean itself, the individual soul becomes the mighty supreme soul, withhigherconsciousness, transcendental bliss and knowledge.

19 SEPTEMBER - SAMADHI - TRUE AND FAKE

Do not mistake deep sleep for samadhi. The glory of the state of turiya is ineffable. Its splendour is indescribable. If the body is light, if the mind is clear, if there is cheerfulness, know that you are meditating. If the body is heavy, the mind dull, know that you are sleeping while meditating.

There is always a complaint among aspirants : "I have been meditating for the last twelve years and I have not made any improvement, any realisation. What is the matter?" They have not plunged themselves in deep meditation in the innermost recesses of their hearts. They have not properly saturated the mind with thoughts of God. They have not done regular, systematic sadhana (practice). They have not disciplined the indriyas (senses) properly. They have not collected all the out-going rays of the mind. They have not made the self-determination that : "I will realise God this very second". They have not given the whole mind to God. They have not kept up an increasing flow of divine consciousness.

Even if you do not feel any pulse in the sadhaka (seeker) when he is in meditation, even if the breathing stops, do not think that he is in nirvikalpa samadhi (unconditioned state) - if he is, he will return with super-sensual divine knowledge - then only can it be said that he has attained real samadhi. Breathing and pulse may stop from various other causes as well.

The sadhaka must have perfect awareness in meditation. There is not much gain if he remains in mere jada (inert) state, even though he is insensible to external sounds.

O aspirant, struggle hard. Make sincere efforts. Meditate regularly and systematically. Enough of heated discussions and heated debates. Retire into a solitary room. Close your eyes. Have deep silent meditation. Feel God's presence. Repeat His name - Om - with fervour, joy and love. Fill your heart with prem. Destroy thoughts, whims, fancies and desires when they arise on the surface of the mind.

Withdraw the wandering mind. Fix it on the Lord. Now meditation will become deep and intense. Do not open your eyes. Do not stir from your seat. Merge in him. Dive deep in the recesses of your heart. Plunge into the shining atman. Drink the nectar of immortality. Enjoy the silence. Peace. Silence. Glory.

20 SEPTEMBER - THE LIBERATED SAGE

If thevasanas(tendencies)andtheattachmenttoobjectsoftheworldvanishentirely,andifyou are inthatimmovablestate,thenyouhavebecomeajivanmukta(liberatedsage).Youwillabide in yourownself.Youwillrestinthatnon-dual,supremeseat.Thejnana-visionwillariseinyou, the lightofwisdomwillshineunobscured,likethesunintheabsenceofclouds.Youwillneverbe attracted to any worldly objects now. You will be absolutely freed from delusion and sorrow.

You willactuallyfeelthattheselfalonepervadesandpermeateseverywhereintheworld.You will shinewithBrahmiceffulgence.Youwillpossessequal-visionandabalancedmind.Youwillbe free fromlongingforsensualobjectsbecausethemindwillalwaysremaincoolwithBrahmicbliss. You will bebathedinthecoolambrosialnectarthatdribblesfromthecontentedandquietmind.

Advancedaspirantsshouldstopallsortsofworkandstudyofreligiousbooks,iftheywantto enterintosamadhiquickly.Theyshouldobservemaunaandremaininasolitaryplaceonthe banksoftheGanges,theYamunaoranyothersuitableriver.Theyshouldliveononeandahalf pintsofmilkalone,ortheyshouldliveonmilkandfruitsalone.Theyshouldplungethemselves into samadhi in right earnest.

Theyshouldreducesleeptotwoorthreehours.Theyshouldstartthepracticeatthebeginning of winter.Thereisrealrestinmeditation-itisfarsuperiortothatrestobtainedindeepsleep. Sound sleep for an hour or even half an hour will suffice the man who meditates regularly.

Samadhi,moksha(liberation),turiya(transcendentalstate),aresynonomousterms.Samadhi means superconsciousness.Insamadhithemeditatorisconsciousofhisownself.Mokshais freedomfrombirthanddeath.Itistheattainmentofthestateof'paramananda'(supremebliss). It is freedomfromallsortsofpains.Turiyatranscendsthethreestates-thewakingstate,the dream stateandthedeepsleepstate-andsoitiscalledthefourthstate.

21 SEPTEMBER - NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

The state of samadhi is beyond the reach of mind and speech. Even in worldly experience, you cannot express taste. You cannot express the taste of an apple to one who has not tasted it, nor can you explain the nature of colour to a blind man. The state of samadhi is all joy, bliss and peace; this much only can be said. One has to feel this for himself.

In samadhi or the superconscious state, the meditator loses his individuality and becomes identical with the supreme self. He becomes an embodiment of bliss, peace and knowledge. So much only can be said. This can be experienced by you through constant meditation.

Nirvikalpa samadhi is the state of superconsciousness or godhead. There is no vikalpa or imagination of any sort in this condition. This is the goal of life. All mental activities cease now. The function of the intellect and the ten indriyas. (senses) cease entirely.

The spiritual aspirant now rests in atman (self). There is no distinction between subject and object. The world and the pairs of opposites vanish absolutely. This is a state beyond all relativity - though it is not a state of inertia. It is a condition of complete, perfect awareness. It is indescribable. It must be felt and experienced by the aspirant himself. In this state the triad - the knower, known and knowable - disappears. Man is now Brahman - there is no jivahood.

Try to enjoy that sleepless state wherein all senses and mind remain in a state of quietude and the intellect ceases functioning. The sleepless sleep is maha nidra (the superconscious state). There is no waking from this sleep.

In samadhi the yogi gets himself merged in the Lord. All limitations and differences disappear. The yogi attains highest knowledge and bliss. This state is beyond description. You will have to realise it yourself.

Samadhi is the superconscious state in which the veil of ignorance is suddenly lifted and the devotee merges in the overwhelming glory of the one true divine effulgence. In samadhi the soul becomes loosened from its material prison and is separated from individual consciousness. An ecstatic feeling of oneness arises and the soul becomes absorbed in the infinite intelligence from which it emanated.

After attaining samadhi a man, though possessed of great spiritual powers, does not wish to change the conditions and circumstances in which he lived before attaining it. In samadhi, ordinary consciousness has flowered into superconsciousness. The stream of samsara (the stream of births and deaths) has ceased to flow.

22SEPTEMBER - A TREE WITHOUT ROOTS

There isamysterioustree,
It has noroots.
It has grownwithoutaseed,
It bearsfruitswithoutflowers,
It has nobranches,noleaves,
It has nopith,nostem.
Many birdsaresittingonthistree.
It is a veryancienttree,
It is beginninglessandendless;
It is causeless,
It never driesup,
It cannot becutbyaxe.
It gives sheltertomillions;
It is vijnana-vrksa(treeofpureknowledge).
It gives immortality,
It is superior to kalpakavriksha(wish-fulfilling tree).
Thus sayeth Sivananda

MY AUSPICIOUSDAY

I celebratedthisauspiciousday
with great éclat and pomp,
Withilluminationandjoyfulsongs.
My wish has been fulfilled.
I havemetmyBeloved.
How shall I find words
For the beauty of my Beloved?
Heisbrilliantlikemillionsofsuns,
Hehasenthronedhimselfinmyheart.
Thelampofloveburnslustrously.
IbathedHimwiththewateroflove,
IadornedHimwiththeflowersof prem (love),
Igavehimbutterandsugar-candy.
I have drunk the cup of love,
Which is filled to the brim;
It is the cup of perfect joy,
My rapture wells forth.
ThemercyofmyLordhascomeupon me.
How blessed am I
Who have seen my Beloved.
So saysSivananda

23SEPTEMBER-WORK WORK WORK

Do nottalkofvedantaandBrahman,
Work, work, work.
There is too much talk and vedantic gossiping,
Enough of tall talk and gossiping.
Give up lecturing and pedantry,
Become a practical vedantin.
Be goodtoothers,evenatthepointofabayonet.
Show your strength and courage now.
Develop a soft heart,
That can melt at the sufferings of others,
This will lead you to the realisation of unity.
I wantfieryyoungmen–
Brave, dispassionate and wise,
Withironwillandferro-concretebodyandnerves,
Who can pulverise the Himalayas,
Who can sip the waters of the ocean,
Who can devour death like a pickle,
Who can swim across the Pacific,
Who can uproot Mount Everest,
Who can swallow the ball of fire.
Thus sayeth Sivananda
TAKE A DOSE OF DIVINE DRUG

O Man!Takeadoseofthismysteriousdrug.

The wonderfuldrugthatgrowswithin,
The drugthatcuresthediseaseofdeath–
The drugoflife,lightandbliss,
The drugthatbestowsimmortality.
The divinedrug,thedrugofgrace,
The drugthatmakesyoudanceinjoy,
The rarestdrugthatdispelsthedarkness,
The loveliestdrugthatisprecious,
The onlydrugthatremovesgrief,
The drugthatkillsthesixpassions,
The drugthatmakesyoufearless,
The drugthatputsyouintosamadhi.
It is the silentdrugBhumi,
thy innermostatman.
That is my strength,joyandcure-all,
That is the potentialimmortalelixir.
Thus sayeth Sivananda

24SEPTEMBER-IMMORTAL ABODE

There, the Brahman dwellsbyHimself;
There, He sits without support;
There, there is neither daynornight;
There, there is neither virtuenorvice;
There, there is neither lightnordark;
There, the sun and moondonotrise;
There, pain and sufferingdonotenter;
There, death cannot blowhistrumpet;
There, hunger and diseasecannottorment;
There, nobody sleeps or wakes.
It is a city of deathlessness.
It is the abode of fearlessness.
It is the seat of eternalbliss.
It is Brahma NirvanaorParamamgati.
Sivananda says: "MeditateonBrahman,onthespot
Where the GangesandtheJamunameet;
And rest peacefully,forever".

HAPPINESS IS WITHIN

The musk is in the navel of the deer;
But it runs here and there to smell it.
The chain is on the neck of the damsel;
But she runs hither and thither to search for it.
The tenth man is there in reality;
But he forgets to count himself and cries.
Fresh butter is with you in abundance;
And yet you go here and there in search of ghee.
The precious diamond is within you;
But you run after the broken glass-pieces in vain.
The key is in your pocket;
Butyouaresearchingforitinvain,hereandthere.
Even so the ocean of bliss is within you,
And yet you run here and there in search for it.
The Sun of suns is ever-shining in you;
But your blind eyes cannot behold it.
The eternal sound is ringing within you;
But your deaf ears cannot hear it.
Sivananda says: "Look within and meditate,
And enjoy the eternal bliss of atman."

25 SEPTEMBER - SIT IN SILENCE

I am neither male nor female;
I am neither dvaita (dualism) nor advaita (non-dualism);
I am neither saguna (with qualities) nor nirguna (without qualities);
I am neither seer nor hearer;
I am neither body nor mind;
I am neither far nor near;
I am neither black nor red;
I am neither thin nor stout;
I live neither by food nor by air;
I neither move nor stop;
I shall neither go to hell nor to heaven;
I neither laugh nor weep;
I work and yet I do not work;
I hear without ears and see without eyes;
I smell without nose and taste without tongue;
Few understand Me.
He who understands Me, sits in silence.
Sivananda says: "Mysterious is that silence.
Drown yourself in that silence And be happy."
COME OUT OF YOUR MEDITATION

O Fool! What are you doing in the room?

Why have you shut the doors?
Are you meditating or building sand castles?
Are you planning or sleeping?
What do you see with closed eyes?
Darkness? Or some white spots?
Is this your vision of God?
Do not waste this precious human life.
See God everywhere - in the sun
In the trees, the child, the cow,
In the breeze, in the old man,
In the running brooks, in the landscapes.
He is not within your trikuti (eyebrow centre) alone.
Can you meditate for twenty-four hours?
Do not become tamasic or lazy.
Do not mistake tamas (inertia) for satva (divinity).

Enough, enough of your meditation.
Thy cells are charged with heavy tamas.
Come out and serve God in all forms.
Here is a dynamic path of cosmic vision.
So says Sivananda

26SEPTEMBER-MUSIC OF SILENCE

Hear the musicofthemeetingofthesoulwithsoul –
It is the divinemusic,thrillingandsoul-stirring.
It is the musicthatgivesrapturousecstasy.
The light of thismusicilluminestheworld.
It is the sourceofallvocalmusic,
It is the sourceofallmusicalinstruments,
It is the musicofthatsupremesilence,
It is the musicofthefluteofSriKrishna,
It is the musicthatdelightsRadha,
It is the musicwithoutstringingandplaying,
It is the musicofthesahasrara(thousand-petalled) lotus.
Sivananda says:"Listentome,brother,
There are onlyafew
Who have heardthismusicofsilence".

THYSELF KNOWESTTHYSELF

We cannotknowthynature.

Thou alone knowest what thou art,
Thyself knowest Thyself, by Thyself.
The mind cannot reach Thee –
What can poor understanding know?
Speech cannot reach so far,
The power of thought fails.
Thou art not a mental concept,
YoucannotbeconfinedWithinthewallsofthemind –
Thouartinfinite.Asceticspractisepancagnitapas ("five-fire austerity"),
Hatha yogis stop their breath
And practise tratak (gazing).
By devotion alone
You can be known in essence.
Only a few blessed ones
Have realized Thee,
Only through thy grace.
So saysSivananda

27SEPTEMBER-HERE RAINS NECTAR

My heart drinksthenectarnow,
I have plungedmyselfinthatoceanofjoy,
I have drunkthecupofimmortalbliss.
There isneitherdoubtnorsorrowhere.
The terrorofdeathisnomore.
There isthesweetfragranceofthesoul.
The musicofthesoulsoundsitself.
Supreme freedom reigns here,
Brilliant effulgence streams forth,
Thereistheunstruck,sweetmelodyofharmony.
This is the sorrowless land of an old man.
The thirst of the five senses is quenched here.
Here the rain of nectar pours and pours,
The sacred stream of the Jamuna-ganga
Flows here perennially.
The round of births and deaths ceases here.
Come, come my sweet companions,
Visit this limitless domain but once
And see my supreme Lord's Durbar (court).
So saysSivananda
OCEAN OF SWEETNESS

I havefoundthekeyofthemystery.
There is wonderful rest in the land of bliss.
Wonderful is the sorrowless land.
It isaninfiniteoceanofsweetness.
Look within and rest peacefully.
The three forms of misery are no more,
The five kinds of afflictions are not here.
One becomes speechless and silent –
There is stupendous silence.
The seer, seen and sight have become one.
The knower, known and knowable are one.
Thereisthedivinemusicofthesupremeharmony
Without the play of fingers and strings.
One enjoys freedom and perfection.
Bliss is filled to the very brim.
I have realized oneness -So says Sivananda

28 SEPTEMBER - SHOWER THY GRACE

O Lord, if thou art the sun,
I am thy ray.
If thou art the ocean,
I am the drop.
If thou art the lotus,
I am the petal.
If thou art the tree,
I am the leaf.
There is no other Lord like thee –
Thou art the ocean of compassion.
I have no qualification
And yet Thou hast blessed me.
By singing Thy name
I have broken all fetters,
I have cut Yama's noose.
Sivananda sings to obtain Thy grace.

THOU ART MY SUPPORT

O Lord, Thou alone art my mind and senses.
Thou art my tongue, ears and eyes.
Thou art my prana, (the vital breath).
Thou alone dwellest in my heart.
Thou alone abideth in my breath.
Thou fillest my whole body.
Thou art the life within me.
Thou art the prompter of my thoughts.
Thou art the inner ruler.
Thou movest all the internal organs.
Thou illumineth my intellect.
Thou art my all in all.
Thou art my very soul.
Thou art the soul of my soul.
I have none but Thee.
Thou alone art my real friend.
Thou art my guru, my father and my mother. ---So says Sivananda
Thou art my sole refuge,
I long for Thy grace alone.
Thou art the knower and the teacher,
Thou art the knowledge that knows,
Thou art the ultimate truth –
That is known or realised ---So says Sivananda

29SEPTEMBER - COME TO ME

I wantonlyThee,myLord.
When the senses hiss and drag me,
Come to me and crush them.
When I am overworked and tired,
CometomewithThypeaceandharmony.
When my mind becomes turbulent,
Come to me with Thy yoga power,
And stillthisboisterousmind.
When desires and cravings attack me,
Come to me with Thy light and grace.
When fear overpowers me,
Come to me with Thy courage.
Whenavidya(ignorance)triestooverwhelm me,
Come to me with Thy supreme wisdom.
Thus sayeth Sivananda
SECRET OF LOVE
Subtle and profound is the path of love.
It is liketheedgeofasharprazor.
But thetruelovertreadsiteasily.
His gracerendershispathsmooth.
There is no asking or bargaining there,
It is allsacrificeandself-surrender.
It is theout-pouringoftheheart'slove
At thelotusfeetoftheLord.
Egoism is burnt in the fire of love,
Desiresaredestroyedintheflameoflove.
Two have become one now.
The lover plunges himself
In the ocean of divine love,
He immerses himself
In the sea of divine joy.
He offers his all in the Lord's service,
Histan(body),man(mind),dhan(wealth) –
This is the secret of this love.
Thus sayeth Sivananda

30SEPTEMBER-SONGOFADMONITION

Hare RamaHareRamaRamaRamaHareHare
Hare KrishnaHareKrishnaKrishnaKrishnaHareHare.
Radhe Shyama Radhe Shyama Shyama Shyama Radhe Radhe
Radhe Krishna Radhe Krishna Krishna Krishna Radhe Radhe
Gouri Sankar Gouri Sankar Sankar Sankar Gouri Gouri
Uma Sankar Uma Sankar Sankar Sankar Uma Uma.
my Jesus O Lord Jesus Hail Hail Jesus O Father Father
O my Mary O Virgin Mary Hail Hail Mary O Mother Mother
O my Buddha O Lord Buddha Hail Hail Buddha O Saviour Saviour
O my Allah O Lord Allah Hail Hail Allah O Father Father
O my Shakti O Adi Shakti Hail Hail Shakti O Mother Mother.

Is there not a nobler mission than eating, drinking and sleeping?
Itisdifficulttogetahumanbirth,thereforetryyourbesttorealisein this birth.
Fieonthatwretch,woetothatman,whowastesallhislifeinsensual pleasures.
Time sweeps away kings and barons –
Where is Yudhistra? Where is Asoka? Where is Shakespeare?
Where is Valmiki? Where is Napoleon? Where is Shivaji?
Be up and doing (in) Yogic Sadhana, you will enjoy Supreme bliss.
Beupanddoing(in)BrahmaVichar,youwillattainImmortality(Kaivalya Moksha).
Can you expect real Santi if you waste your time in idle gossiping?
CanyouenjoySupremePeaceifyouwasteyourtimeinnovelsandnewspapers?
in fights and quarrels?
inscandalbackbiting?
Am I not Thou? Art Thou not I? One alone is therefore true
When the mind melts in the silence, you will have self-realisation.
Whathaveyoulearnt,tellmefranklyfromtheBiharandQuettaearthquakes?
Have you got now real Vairagya? Do you practise Japa and Kirtan?
Canyouexpectrealsantiifyouwasteyourtimeincardsandcinemas?
Whenyourthroatischokedatthetimeofdeathwhowillhelpyoufor your salvation?
(Hare Rama Hare Rama .....)

1 OCTOBER - SONG OF A KARMA YOGIN

Hari ke premi Hari Hari bolo
Avo pyare milker gawo
Hari charaname dhyana laghavo
Dukhme sukhme Hari Hari bolo
Abhiman tyago seva karo
Narayan Narayan Narayan Narayan.

Give up Brahmin, Sanyas abhiman,
Give up male-female, sex abhiman.
Give up doctor, judge abhiman,
Give up Rajah, Zamindar abhiman.

Relinquish pundit, scientist abhiman
Crush this professor, engineer abhiman
Kill this collector, thasildar abhiman.

Kill this vairagya, Seva abhiman
Kill this Tyagi, Kartritva abhiman.
(Narayan Narayan ....)

Remember always Hari Hari Hari Hari,
Sing always Sita-Ram, Radheshyam,
See good in every face,
Share what you have withothers.
Develop nicely adaptability
Serve always with NarayanaBhav.
Scrutinise always your innermotives
Work without egoism,
Cultivate the Nimitta-Bhav,
Give up expectation of fruits.

Surrender always fruits to theLord,
Have equal vision and balanced mind.
Selfless work will purify yourheart,
Then you will get knowledgeof self.
(Narayan Narayan .....)

2 OCTOBER - ANNIHILATE THE EGO

Study the autobiographyofMahatmaGandhi.Henevermadeanydifferencebetweenmenial service and dignifiedwork.Scavengingorcleaningthelatrineswerethehighestyogaforhim,the highest puja.Heannihilatedhisillusorylittle‘ego’throughthisservice.

Many highlyeducatedpersonsjoinedhisashramtolearnyogaunderhim.Theythoughtthat Gandhijiwouldteachthemyogainsomemysteriousmanner,inaprivateroom.Theythought that hewouldteachthempranayama,meditation,awakeningofthekundalini,etc.Theywere asked tocleanthelatrinesfirst.

Gandhijiusedtomendhisownshoes.Hehimselfusedtogrindtheflour.Hewouldtakeupon himselftheworkofotherswhentheywereunabletodotheirallottedportionofwork.Whenan educatedperson,anewashramite,feltshytodogrindingwork,Gandhijihimselfwoulddothe work infrontofhim.Andthenthemanwouldwillinglydotheworkthenextday.

Try to dodailyasmanyvirtuousactionsaspossible.Whenyougotosleephaveareviewofyour day's actions.Marktheminyourspiritualdiary.Performanceofvirtuousactionsisthebeginning of spirituallife.

Repeat mentallyorsilentlywiththebreath,theLord'sname-suchasHariOm,SriRam,oryour own ishta mantra.Dothisevenwhenyouareworkingintheoffice:Astronghabitofrepetition of the mantra willsoonbeformed.

Karma, accordingtoJaiminiRishi,istheperformanceofagnihotraandothervedicrituals. According to theGitaanyactiondonewithnishkamyabhava(unselfishly,motivelessly),iskarma yoga. Lord Krishnasays:"Workincessantly.Yourdutyistoworkbutnottoexpectthefruits thereof." The centralteachingoftheGitaisnon-attachmenttowork.Breathing,eating,seeing, hearing, thinking,etc.,areallkarmas.

Service of your guruoramahatma(saint)isthehighestformofkarmayoga.Thispurifiesyour heart quickly. Contactwithagreatsoulorguruhasimmenseadvantages.Youwillbenefitbythe magnetic aura of thegreatpersonage.Youwilldrawinspirationfromhim.

3 OCTOBER - SONG OF MEDITATION

Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram
Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram
Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram
Ram Ram Ram Ram

Truth is Brahman, truth is your own self,
Realise this truth, be free, be free, be free, be free.
You must have a pure mind, if you want to realise
Practise karma yoga, be pure, be pure, be pure, be pure.

You cannot enjoy peace of mind
And cannot practise meditation
If you are passionate, kill this lust, kill this lust.
Be regular in your meditation,
And take Satvic food,
You will have peace of mind, this is the Truth, this is the Truth.

When you meditate on Hari, keep His picture in front of you,
Look at it with a steady gaze, you will develop concentration.
If evil thoughts enter the mind,
Do not drive them forcibly,
Substitute divine thoughts, they will pass away, they will pass away.

Meditation leads to knowledge, meditation kills pains,
Meditation brings peace, meditate, meditate, meditate, meditate.
Samadhi is union with God, this follows meditation.
You will attain immortality, this is moksha, this is moksha.

SONG OF EIGHTEEN 'ITIES'

Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity,
Sincerity, simplicity, veracity.
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability,
Adaptability, humility, tenacity,
Integrity, nobility, magnanimity,
Charity, generosity, purity.
Practise daily these eighteen 'ities',
You will soon attain immortality.
Brahman is the only real entity,
Mr. So and So is a false non-entity,
You will abide in eternity and infinity,
You will behold unity in diversity,
You cannot attain this in the university.

4 OCTOBER - I AM SIVA

I am Siva, the life and soul of all. I am the substratum for all the forms of the world. I am the substratum for the mind, prana (life) and senses. I am the energy in the atoms and the elements. I am the effulgence of the sun, moon and stars. I am the beauty of beauties. I am the charm and beauty in women. I am the life of all youth. I am the intelligence in all scientists, educationalists, culturists, research scholars and philosophers.

I am the foundation of the world. I am the wisdom of the sages. I am the siddhis (powers) in yogis. I am the life of the cyclones, earthquakes and volcanoes. I am the energy in dynamos. I am the energy in all germs and microbes. I am the power in herbs, minerals and tonics. I am goodness, truth, success and prosperity. I am Siva, the life and soul of all.

Lumbago and rheumatism shake my body. All diseases are my guests. Let them stay. What is that to me? I welcome them cordially. I always sing: "I am not this body, not this mind. “Cidananda rupah sivoham sivoham". Idefy, deny diseases. What is it to be if the body perishes? I am anamaya (diseaseless) atman(self). I am the life of this cosmic play.

I have burnt up all duality.Iam sat-cidananda. I have drunk the cup of pure knowledge - it is all sweet nectar. There areneither vrittis (thought-waves) nor vasanas (tendencies) in the absolute. There is neither thoughtnorworld here. I have experienced this supreme state - it is neither dual nor non-dual. It is onlykevalasti (pure being). It is pure consciousness or supreme essence.

KNOW THE ATMAN: Ifatmicreality is cognised then all differences between trees, mountains, clothes and ‘others', willvanish. With them sankalpas (thoughts) will also be swept away. The only way out of grief anddelusion is the inner realisation of the unity of the individual soul with Brahman (the absolute).Theatman is to be known - there is no attainment higher than that. One fears not death who hasrealised Brahman, who is serene, ageless, self-luminous, desireless, firm, immortal and self-existent.

5 OCTOBER - STRIVE

Strive. Strive to realise God. This is the purpose of human birth. The perfection of the realisation of absolute knowledge, supreme bliss and immortality is the one and only goal in human life. Release from the round of births and life in eternity is the goal of man. Till self-realisation is attained, man is subject to the law of karma and rebirth. Finish your task --- God-realisation in this life itself; do not postpone it. Just as food is necessary for the body so also daily meditation and prayer are necessary for the soul.

O man! Wake up from this slumber of ignorance. Why do you waste your life building castles in the air? Turn your gaze within. Stop all this hurry and worry. Sit down and relax. Dive deep within. Discover the pearl of atman. You will be freed from birth and death here and now.

Remember the goal every moment of this life. Strive incessantly to realize it by living a life of detachment, dispassion, devotion, deep meditation and samadhi (self knowledge).

O man! Nothing is permanent. All things change. All things pass away. Seek the permanent, changeless, immortal atman and be free. He is truly wise who lives in the eternal and who is endowed with discrimination and dispassion.

Life is a transforming process by which attachment, fear, anger, hatred and lust are transformed by steady and rigorous discipline and meditation into joy, bliss, peace and love.

In simplicity is the secret of real beauty. Simplify your life. Be humble, pure, straight forward and true to yourself and others. Be good and do good so that each tomorrow will find you farther than today. Be humble, be meek, be pure, be holy, be godly and peaceful. Be charitable. Be moral. Be humble. Be courageous. Be pure. Meditate. Become wise. Whoever does anything with enthusiasm, patience and perseverance, never fails to achieve his object. Annihilate desires.

Seek the company of saints and devotees. Control the mind. Control anger. Be charitable. Help the needy. Kill the ego. Be grateful. Respect the great. Be truthful. Indulge not in gossip. You will attain the supreme blessedness.

6 OCTOBER - REALISE THY TRUE NATURE

First, learn to knowyourself,thetruevalueofyourowncharacter.Thenalone you will be able to serve humanityandbenefitpeople.Youaretaintless,tranquil,pureconsciousness; you are beyond nature.Allthistimeyouhavebeendupedbyillusion,maya. Know oneindividual(yourself)correctly-andyoucanknowthewholeworld. To know thy self, is to knowGod.Seekperfection,freedomandeternalblissintheatmanorself, by the self and throughtheself.Talkonlyoftheatman.Purify,meditate,loseyourselfinBrahman or the absolute and youwillfindyourself,youwillknowyourself.

Nobodydoubtshisownexistence,thoughhemaydoubttheexistenceofGod. Find the truth, the sourceofyourownselfandthenyouwillknoweverything.Themoreyouknow the more you will grow inhumility.Iclimbedthepeakofvedantaandmergedintheightof Lights. How can I expressit?Toexpresstheunspeakable-allwordsarefeeble.Iamthewitness - the eternal, pure, infinite,internalself.IamSivahimself.Iamchangeless.Noneofthethings of the world have touchedme,willevertouchme.Ihavenomoods-Iambeyondmoods.Iam the blissful atman. The lightwhichilluminestheintellect,thesun,themoon,thestarsandalsoyonder lamp, is bliss eternal. That light am I. Om.

If youfindyouneedaplaceofperfectsecurityandpeacethencome,sitinmy heart and be one withme.Thereisacentralharmonywithinyou,awisdom,aspiritofwholeness which is divine. Thatisimmortalatman,yourowninnermostsoulorself.Dwellinthisatman. Realise this atman andbefreeforever.Theatmanorsupremeselfmustberealised.Thisispractical religion.

Open the eye of your heart,

Enjoy the vision of the Lord.
Break the seal of your ego,
Realise the eternal bliss of the self.
Clean the dirt of your mind's mirror,
Behold the beauty of the majestic atman.
Sit on the horse of brahmakara vritti.
Reach yourdestination;thehomeofeternalpeace.

Still the waves of the mind,
Take a dip in the ocean of bliss,
Shut up your mouth and the mouth of the mind

And enjoy thepeaceofsupremesilence.

7 OCTOBER - PERSEVERE IN SADHANA

Let the sadhana (spiritual practice) always be regular, continuous, unbroken and earnest. Not only regularity but also continuity in sadhana and meditation are necessary if you want to attain self-realisation quickly.

Aspiritual stream, once set going, does not dry up unless the channel-bed gets blocked, unless there is stagnation. Be vigilant eternally. Meditate regularly. Annihilate the under-current of vasana (habit-patterns).

Patience, perseverance, courage, determination, discrimination and dispassion are needed to tread the spiritual path. Put away thoughts, stimuli, perceptions, intentions, emotions, feelings, preoccupations and deliberations arising out of the senses and the sense objects.

You will attain supreme blessedness or the peace of the eternal. Keep the flame of thy aspiration ever kindled bright. Let purity, serenity, compassion, truth and oneness, manifest in thy thoughts and actions. Through penance, prayer and meditation the soul ascends on the divine chariot, to the realms of infinite bliss, to God's halls of wisdom.

Regularity is of paramount importance in spiritual practice. Spiritual aspirants must be arduous and efficient in performing their tasks without a break. Pray without a break. Have unshakable faith.

Remember vairagya (dispassion) and abhyasa (constant practice). Prayer is the wing by which you fly to God. Meditation or intuition is the eye by which you see God. Pray fervently unto the Lord. Pray for the Lord's light and guidance.

Meditate on the great truth within. Strive ever to keep thyself close to the divine centre. Day by day draw nearer unto the Lord. Strive inwardly to grow into the likeness of the divine ideal.

8 OCTOBER - WHAT IS VEDANTA

Om. Vedanta is that bold philosophy which teaches the unity of life or oneness of consciousness. It is that supreme philosophy which boldly proclaims, with emphasis and force, that this little jiva (human being) is identical with the eternal or absolute. It is that sublime philosophy which elevates the mind at once to magnanimous heights of Brahmanhood, divine splendour and glory, which makes a man absolutely fearless, which destroys all barriers that separate man from man and which brings concord, unruffled peace and harmony to suffering humanity. It is the only philosophy that can really unite (on the basis of one common self in all) a Hindu and a Mohammedan, a Catholic and a Protestant, an Irishman and an Englishman, a Jain and a Parsee, in a common platform and in the core of their own hearts also. It is the only philosophy that, when properly understood and practised, can put a definite stop to world wars and all sorts of dissensions, splits and skirmishes that exist in nations and communities.

Vedanta is a magnetic healing balm for the wounded and the afflicted in the dreadful battlefield of this dire samsara (phenomenal existence). Vedanta is the divine collyrium which removes the cataract of ignorance and gives a new, inner eye of intuition or wisdom. Vedanta is the direct, royal road to the domain of felicity; it is the supreme abode of immortality and eternal bliss. I is a panacea, a 'cure-all' for those who are being burned by the three fires and the five afflictions of this miserable mundane existence. It is the Himalayan herb that can bring immediate life to a dying man. It lifts a man, at once, to the status of Emperor of emperors, King of kings - even though he has nothing to eat; even though he is clad in rags.

Vedanta gives real spiritual strength; it inspires, renovates, vivifies, invigorates and energises. It eradicates ignorance - the root cause for human sufferings. It puts a stop to the never ending wheel of birth and death and confers immortality, infinite knowledge and bliss. It gives hope to the hopeless, power to the powerless, vigour to the vigourless and joy to the joyless.

Vedanta is the only universal, eternal religion. Vedanta means 'end of the vedas' or the essence of the teaching of the srutis (scriptures).

9 OCTOBER - ESSENCE OF VEDANTA

Vedanta is expressed in the mahavakhyas (great sentences) of the Upanishads as "Tat twam asi" - "thou art that"; "Aham brahma asmi" "I am the self." Vedanta says, "O little man! Do not identify yourself with this perishable body. Give up 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness'! Do not hate your neighbour or brother. Do not try to exploit him -he is your own self. There is a common self or common consciousness in all. This is the same in a king and a peasant, in an ant and a dog, in a man and a woman, in a cobbler and a scavenger. This is the real immortal entity. Mind is the dividing principle. It tempts and deludes. Kill this mischievous mind. Control the indriyas (senses) which drag you out to the external objects. Fix the mind in the source. Rise above body and mind. Eradicate desires. Learn to discriminate the real from the unreal. Identify yourself with this immortal, non-dual, self-existent, self-luminous essence. Behold the one self in all. See the one in many. All miseries will come to an end."

Vedanta speaks of the one atman or Brahman or self who exists in the past, the present and the future, who has no beginning, middle and end, who is the support for everything, who is the embodiment of wisdom, peace and bliss. The seers of the Upanishads have expressed their realisation in glowing terms. They have given out their inner experiences after long research and mighty struggle. All these have been collected in the form of the Upanishads. This constitutes the subject of vedanta philosophy.

Although vedanta is the direct royal road that takes one to the goal, it should not be prescribed for all in a wholesale manner. There are four types of aspirants. They are the karmic (active) type, the bhakti (devotional) type, the mystic type and the rational type. Karma yoga should be prescribed for people of karmic tendencies -for the busy and active men who have mala (impurities) in the mind; bhakti yoga for men of devotional temperament - in whom the emotional element predominates; raja yoga for men of mystic temperament; vedanta yoga for men of reason and will - for people of intellectual temperament.

Vichara (enquiry, "Who am I?") can only benefit that aspirant who is free from impurity and tossing of the mind, who is endowed with bold understanding, gigantic and tremendous will, sharp, subtle intellect and the four means. It is certainly not meant for all - it is meant for the select few only who can really understand and realise the full significance or import of vedanta and reap the fruits.

10 OCTOBER - THE GOAL OF VEDANTA

The goal or aim of life is self-realisation which confers immortality, highest bliss, knowledge and supreme peace. Fixing the mind on the source or inner self and getting it absorbed there is the highest yajna (worship), the highest charity, the highest karma (action), the highest bhakti (devotion), the highest yoga or knowledge. Now the little self-arrogating 'I' vanishes. Just as the river joins the ocean, the little self becomes one with the ocean of bliss. With the disappearance of the little illusory 'I' comes the disappearance of 'you', 'he', 'this', 'that', time, space and causation, 'mine' and thine', the pairs of opposites, the ideas of jiva (soul), Ishvara (God), prakrti (nature), etc. The whole world presents itself as atman. This grand vision this magnanimous samadhi (superconsciousness) is atma-darsan (vision of the ultimate reality), which is beyond description. Many have attained this vision - why not you also? Apply diligently right now in its achievement.

There is something dearer than wealth; there is something dearer than wife or son; there is something dearer than your life itself. That dearer something is thy own self (atman), inner ruler (antaryamin), immortal (amritam). He who dwells in this eye, who is within this eye, whose body this eye is, whom the eye does not know, who rules the eye from within, is thy self, inner ruler, immortal.

The vedantic method of meditation on the formula 'anomayoham' (I am all-health) or the enquiry, "Who am I?" is the most efficient, patient and best method for eradication of all disease and ensuring perfect health and a high standard of vigour and vitality. This is the king of all physical cultures. For those aspirants who practise the, "Who am I?" enquiry and who are not able to keep up good health by this method alone I prescribe the practice of asana (posture) and pranayama (yoga breathing).

The aspirant who has got chittasuddhi (pure mind) will only be able to hear the still, small voice of the soul or self. If there isnopurity he will certainly mistake the voice of the self. He will be misguided - he will blink andgrope in darkness. The help of a realised guru is indispensably requisite in the beginning fortheaspirant who treads the path of jnana yoga.

11 OCTOBER - ROOT OUT ATTACHMENT

Atman is Brahman or absolute or infinite or supreme being. It is existence absolute, knowledge absolute and bliss absolute. It is eternal, perfect, pure, self luminous. It is self-delight and self-knowledge. It is bodiless, formless (nirakara) and attributeless (guna-less). It is all-pervading, all-full, imperishable. It has neither beginning nor end. It exists in the present, the past and the future. It is svayambhu (self-existent). It is the source for the body and the mind, prana (life), indriyas (senses), vedas and the universe. No one can deny it because it is the self of all beings.

Selfishness retards spiritual progress. If anyone can destroy his selfishness, half of his spiritual sadhana (practice) is over. No samadhi or meditation is possible without the eradication of this undesirable, negative quality. Aspirants should direct their whole attention in the beginning towards the removal of this dire malady by protracted, selfless, disinterested service.

Never say 'my body', 'my wife', 'my son', 'my house'. Attachment is the root cause for the miseries and sufferings of this world. Discipline the mind carefully. The old habits will creep in - destroy them at the very root. Lead the life of mental non-attachment. This is the master-key to open the realm of Brahmic bliss. Nonattachment is dispassion or indifference to sensual enjoyments.

It is the mind that creates the ideas of 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness'. It is the mind that links the body and the jiva (soul) and creates intense deha adhyasa (body-consciousness) and the man thinks, "I am the body". If the binding link in the mind is destroyed you can remain wherever you like - you can roam peacefully, in any part of the world, unattached like water on the lotus leaf. Nothing can bind you. The whole mischief is wrought by the mind.

Introspect. Look within. Try to remove your defects. This is real sadhana (practice) - you will have to do it at any cost. Intellectual development is nothing. But the former needs a great deal of struggle for many years as many vicious habits have to be rent asunder.

Keep up the unbroken current of meditation. Avoid mixing. You will soon get over body-consciousness. A little more drastic sadhana is needed for a month - unbroken silence. Do not allow inertia or laziness to overpower you.

12 OCTOBER - MEDITATION IN VEDANTA

Preliminary meditation for six months: 1. On the blue expansive sky, all-pervading air or ether, or light, or Himalayas, or infinite ocean. 2. On abstract qualities - mercy, patience, generosity, etc. 3. On abstract ideas - indivisibility, existence, wisdom, bliss, truth, eternity, immortality, infinity, purity, etc. Will render the mind subtle and sharp and prepare it for deep abstract meditation on atman.

Just as one thread penetrates all flowers in a garland, so also one self penetrates all these living beings. Behold the one self in all. Serve all. Love all. Give up the idea of diversity. You will be established in Brahman. When one Atman dwells in all living beings, then why do you hate others? Why do you use harsh words? Why do you try to rule and dominate others? Why do you exploit others? Why are you intolerant? Is this not the height of folly; is it not sheer ignorance?

Behold the "One in all". Feel, "I am the all", and "I am in all." Feel, "All bodies are mine; the whole world is my body, my sweet home". Feel, "I work in all hands; I eat in all mouths". Feel, "I am the immortal self in all". Repeat these formulas mentally several times a day. Repeat Om mentally and feel oneness of life or unity of consciousness when you play football or tennis, when you drink and eat, when you talk and sing, when you sit and walk, when you bathe and dress, when you work in the office or answer the calls of nature. Spiritualise every movement, action, thought, feeling. Transmute them into yoga. Gradually names and forms will vanish and you will feel, "Aham asmi" (I exist), The balance or residue left will be atman.

Ajnani sees atman everywhere; there is no thought of self; the lower self is entirely annihilated. Helives to serve all. He feels that all is himself only. He has cosmic vision and cosmic feeling. He isfree from worry, trouble, difficulties and sorrow. He is always happy and cheerful.

In the formless vedantic meditation of advaitins (non-dualists) there will be an abstract mental image in the beginning of sadhana (practice). This will vanish eventually. When you meditate, deny names and forms, do neti-neti (not this, not this).

13 OCTOBER - BRAHMAN OF VEDANTA

Brahman cannot be approached by argument. He is unknowable. He is without any limiting adjunct. He is the source of the world, vedas, body, mind and prana (life).

Brahman is the only abode of eternal peace and purity. He is the instrumental and material cause for the universe, though He Himself is causeless because He is beginningless and endless. He is one without a second. He is attributeless. He is free from birth and death.

Brahman is absolute, infinite. He is the supreme being. He is the highest self. He has no attachment; He has no connection with anything - He has no connection with bodies, minds, etc. This is his supreme yoga which ordinary mortals can hardly understand.

Brahman dwells in every heart. He is boundless, unfathomable and immeasurable. There is neither subtle desire nor craving nor sense-hankering in Brahman. He is an embodiment of purity. His name or symbol is Om. He is the silent witness of the activities of the world and the activities of all minds. He is imperishable.

Brahman is absolute consciousness, the indwelling atman. He is the one great indivisible bliss - satchidananda. He is awake when people sleep at night. He is the passive spectator of this world-show or cosmic bioscope. The aspirant finds full and eternal satisfaction in Brahman. All his desires melt away like mist or snow before the rising sun.

There is something behind life, matter, energy, mind that is the ultimate reality - it is eternal and unchanging. The finite mind cannot solve certain problems of life and the riddle of the universe. On account of egoism, we perisist in our vain researches and experiments. But our boasted intellect has failed to satisfy our yearnings and equip us with real knowledge that will dispel our ignorance and give us real peace of mind.

We bow our heads before the inner ruler who dwells in the chambers of our hearts, who is the source of matter, life, energy and mind, who is immortal, eternal, bliss absolute, knowledge absolute and existence absolute. May He now give Us real enlightenment. May He grant us that highest knowledge of self through which alone we can get full knowledge of all secular sciences. Our silent salutations to thathighest self, the Brahman of the vedanta.

14 OCTOBER - GUIDE TO SADHAKAS

No completeknowledgeispossibleaslongasthereistherelationshipofsubjectandobject. When thesubjectandtheobjectmergeintoabsoluteuniontherearenodoubtsorquestions. When youentertheconsciousnessoftheinfiniteyouwillhavenoproblems.Youwillhaveno questionstoask,forthequestionerandthequestionedwillbeone-subjectandobjectwillbe dissolved. Only whenactionisquickenedwithloveandilluminedwithknowledge,thenthepilgriminthe spiritualpathfindshisdestinationandend.Theoneyouseekishewhoseeksyou.Theessential cravingoftheheartistheinnerlight.Hewhohasfaith,hewhoistranquilandself-controlled,he who meditates on the atman attains immortality and eternal bliss.

So,reduceyourwantstotheutmostminimum.Adaptyourselftocircumstances.Neverbe attachedtoanythingortoanybody.Sharewhatyouhavewithothers.Beeverreadytoserve. Losenoopportunity-servewithatma-bhava(feelingthattheselfisall).Speakmeasuredand sweetwords.HaveaburningthirstforGod-realisation.Renounceallyourbelongingsand surrender yourself to God.

Keepyoursoulstrongandfreshandgiveitspiritualfood-prayer,japa(repetitionofGod'sname), selflessservice,etc.Feedyourmindwiththoughtsof God,yourheartwithpurity,yourhands withselflessservice.RemainsoakedinremembranceofGod,withone-pointedmind.Repeatthe Lord'snamewithfaithanddevotion.Meditateonhisformandsurrenderyourheartandsoulto him.

LetthethoughtofGodorrealitykeepawaythethoughtoftheworld.Forgetthefeelingthatyou areso-and-so,thatyouareamaleorafemale,byvigorousbrahma-chintana(contemplationof God.)Neverpostponeathingfortomorrowifitispossibleforyoutodoittoday.Donotboastor makeashowofyourabilities.Besimpleandhumble.Alwaysbecheerful.Giveupworries.Be indifferenttothingsthatdonotconcernyou.Flyawayfrombadcompanyanddiscussion.Be alone for a few hours daily.

Controltheemotionsbydiscriminationandvairagya(dispassion).Maintainequilibriumofmind always.Giveupbackbitingandfault-finding.Findoutyourownfaultsandweaknesses.Seeonly good inothers.Dogoodtothosethathateyou.Shunlust,anger,egoism,moha(delusion)and lobha (greed)likevenomouscobras.

15 OCTOBER - THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD

You yourself have made your life complex. You have entangled yourself in this quagmire. You have multiplied your wants and desires. Every day you are forging new links in the chain of bondage. Simplicity has vanished. Luxurious habits are daily developed. People are dying of starvation; there is depression and unrest everywhere. There is devastation by earthquake. The divorce courts are increasing. One nation is afraid of another nation. Life has become a matter of uncertainty. It has become a mass of confusion and bewilderment; it has become stormy and boisterous.

You can escape fromthesetroublesanddifficultiesifyouleadalifeofdispassion,self-restraint, purity and selflessservice,ifyoudevelopcosmiclove,ifyoumakeahabitofdevelopingtheright point of view, rightthinking,rightfeeling,rightaction,withtherightmentalattitudeandifyou practise meditationanddevotion.

If you havenosustainedvairagya(dispassion)youwillfindnoimprovementorprogressin spirituality.Vows,energy,austeritiesandmeditationwillleakoutlikewaterfromacrackedpot. You havespenteighthoursinsleepandtherestinidlegossiping,tellingliesanddeceivingothers. How canyouexpectspiritualgoodorimmortalityifyoudonotspendevenhalfanhourinthe serviceofGod,insinginghisnameandindivinecontemplation?Istherepainorpleasureinthis world? If there is pleasure then why do young educated men retire into the forests? If thereispainwhydoyoungmenrunafterwealth,positionandwomen?Mysteriousismaya (illusion)!Mysteriousismoha(delusion)!Trytounderstandtheriddleoflifeandtheriddleofthe universe.Acquireviveka(wisdom).Havesatsanga(holycompany).Enquireintothenatureofthe atman. StudytheYogaVasishtaandtheUpanishads.Thenyouwillhaveacomprehensive understanding of the problems of life. There is not one iota of happiness in this world.

Real freedomisfrombirthanddeath.Realfreedomisfreedomfromthetrammelsoffleshand mind. Real freedom-isfreedomfromthebondsofkarma.Realfreedomisfreedomfrom attachment tothebody,etc.Realfreedomisfreedomfromdesiresandfromegoism.

16 OCTOBER - BE ONE WITH ALL

Mere intellectualconceptionofidentityoronenesswillnotserveyourpurpose.Youmustactually feel the truthofitthroughintuition.Youmustbecomefullyawareoftherealself,thebasisor substratum orbedrockofthisworld,body,mind,prana(life)andsenses.Youmustenterinto consciousnessinwhichtherealisationbecomesapartofyoureverydaylife.Youmustlivethe ideal spirituallifedaily.Yourneighboursshouldactuallyfeelthatyouareanentirelychanged being, asuperman.Theyshouldsmellthedivinefragranceinyou.Afull-blownyogiorjnanican never remainincognito.Justasfragrantfumesemanatefromscentedincensesticksoalso spiritual fragrance emanates from the body.

Thereisnosuchthingasinanimatematter.Thereislifeineverything.Lifeisinvolvedinapieceof stone.Allmatterisvibrantwithlife-thishasbeenconclusivelyprovedbymodernscientists.Smile withtheflowersandthegreengrass.Playwiththebutterflies,birdsanddeer.Shakehandswith theshrubs,fernsandtwigsoftrees.Talktotherainbow,wind,starsandsun.Conversewiththe runningbrooksandthewavesofthesea.Speakwiththewalkingstick.Developfriendshipwith allyourneighbours,dogs,cats,cows,humanbeings,trees,flowers,etc.Thenyouwillhaveawide, perfect,rich,fulllife.Youwillrealiseonenessortheunityoflife.Thiscanhardlybedescribedin words - you must feel it for yourself.

A strongmindhasinfluenceoveraweakmind.Mindhasinfluenceoverthephysicalbody.Mind acts uponmatter.Mindbringsbondage.Mindgivesfreedom.Mindisthedevil.Mindisyour friend.Mindisyourguru.Youwillhavetotamethemind.Youwillhavetodisciplinethemind. This isyourimportantduty.

Thereisonlyonecaste-thecasteofhumanity.Thereisonlyonereligion-thereligionoflove, the religionofvedanta.Thereisonlyonedharmathedharmaoftruthfulness.Thereisonlyone law thelawofcauseandeffect.ThereisonlyoneGod-theomnipresent,omniscient,omnipotent Lord. Thereisonlyonelanguage-thelanguageoftheheart;thelanguageofsilence.

17 OCTOBER - KNOW THYSELF NOW

Man is a soul and has a body. Man's true nature is God. You are pure consciousness. Through ignorance you have imposed limitation upon yourself. Reflect and abide in the absolute or Brahman.

Man's innermost essenceisatmanorthedivine spirit. Realising the spirit, man achieves security, certainty, perfection,freedom,independence, immortality and bliss eternal. Man and his life become the startingpointandtheendofphilosophy. Man is of the nature of his faith. What his faith is, that verilyiswhatheis.

Physical body andintellectdependonthesoul within about which man knows little or nothing. Personality is thesumtotalofman.Amanof good personality has a number of good qualities. He behaves quietlyandpolitely.Hehasconfidence in himself. He has the capacity to win other people's cooperation.Hehasthecapacityto draw others towards himself. Hunger, libido and fame are the fundamentalurgesinman.Unless man is liberated from the bondage of the mind and matter he cannothaveknowledgeofthe self and of God.

The head and the heartmustbewedded-then alone there will be perfection and integration in man. Faith, virtue, piety,dispassionandhonesty are the greatest treasures of man. Every man must arise, purify, meditate,anddeclarefreedom unto himself. Man says, "When this (worldly activity) is over then Iwillhavetimetodo that (meditate)". But it is never done because something new turns upallthetimetodistract him. The past cannot be changed. The future is yet in your power. Truthisnotoutsideyou,it is within you. It dwells in the cave of your heart. You are a truth of God,aworkofGod,awillof God. You are unfettered, free - eternally free. Roar Om. Come out of thecageoffleshandroam about freely. When the cause of illusion is pulled away by the roots, whenknowledgeannihilates ignorance (without a possibility of a remnant or reminiscence) - thenthereisnotanego,abody or world to be experienced. When there is the cloud of ignorance youcannotseeGodbutyou cannot say that there is no God.

18 OCTOBER - LEARN FROM SLEEP

Study the condition of deep sleep, where there is neither the play of the mind nor the senses. There are no objects; there is neither attraction nor repulsion . Wherefrom do you derive ananda in sleep? This experience is universal; everyone says: "I slept soundly. I knew nothing. I was very happy in sleep." During deep sleep you rest in satchidananda atman and enjoy the atmic bliss which is independent of objects. The difference between deep sleep and samadhi (super-consciousness) is that in deep sleep there is the veil of ignorance and in samadhi this veil is removed.

From sleep you draw four conclusions: 1. You exist. There is a feeling of continuity of consciousness. 2. There is advaita (oneness). 3. You are ananda svarupa (bliss-itself). 4. The world is mithya (a play of the mind).

Names and forms are illusory. The world is mere play of the mind. When there is mind, there is world. If You can produce destruction of the mind consciously through yoga sadhana (practice), the world will disappear and you will feel the atman everywhere.

Even in the daytime you become one with the atman whenever a desire is gratified. When you enjoy an object you become mindless for a short time. You rest in your own atman and enjoy the atmic bliss. ignorant persons attribute this happiness to the objects. Just as the dog which sucks a dry bone foolishly imagines that the blood comes from the dry bone whereas in reality the blood oozes out of its own palate, so also foolish persons imagine that happiness comes from external objects, while they actually derive the happiness from their own Atman within. They are deluded owing to the force of illusion and ignorance.

Have no longing for objects. Reduce your wants. Cultivate vairagya (dispassion); it thins out the mind.

Do not mix much. Do not talk much. Do not walk much. Do not eat much. Do not sleep much. Control the emotions. Abandon desires and vasanas (tendencies). Control irritability and lust.

19 OCTOBER - THE ONENESS OF ALL EXISTENCE

Realise thetotalityandall-inclusivenessofyourlife.Yourbeingiscosmic. You inhabit all the worlds - alltheworldsareyourspontaneousexpression.One'sloveforfriends, sons, etc. is not for the sakeofothers,butforone'sownself.Thereforeloveforselfisthe highest and hence full of supremehappiness.Themoreyougiveupyourhankeringsforobjects and try to realise your identity withthetrueselforAtman,themoreyouwillrealiseyourtruehappiness. The path ofevolutionisfromunconsciousnesstolife;fromlifeto consciousness; from consciousnesstoself-consciousness;andfromself-consciousnessto superconsciousness. Mysticism istheartofunionwiththereality.Amysticisapersonwhohas attained that union with the reality,orwhoisaimingforthatattainment.

What is thisego;whatisthislittle'I'?Isityourfootorfleshorhandorblood - or any part of your body? Reflectwell.Youwillknowthatthereisnosuchthingas'I'.The 'I' will vanish into nothingness.Whatisleftisthepure,infiniteatman.Whentheegoperishes, the supreme soul reveals itselfinallitspristinegloryandsplendour.

Do not seektosatisfytheego-offerallyourlifeandactionsassacredsacrifice to the supreme divine. Youyourselfarepassingadeathsentenceonyourself-youarecreating a hell by your own evil thoughts.Itisuselesstolookuptotheskiestofindthedivine.Turn inwards. In your own heart dwellstheeternal.

COSMIC POWERHOUSE

Individual soulsarelikeelectriclightbulbs.Thebulbsgettheirlightfrom the power house. The jivas (souls) gettheirpowerfromBrahman,theinfinitecosmicpowerhouse. The bulb imagines that it is independentandboastsofitseffulgenceandpower.Ithasnoidea of its source. When the current failsithangsitsheadinshameandweeps.Evensothejivadrags out his egoism. O fool, O dunce, knowthesourcethroughpurity,devotion,tapas,meditation and enjoy supreme peace and eternalbliss.

20 OCTOBER - ONEPOINTEDMIND

(Siva was very busy attending to the dispatch offreebooks.Hesuddenlystoppedandlooked up.)

From thetimeIgotoutofthemorningclassIhavebeengoingonthinkingofwritingafewpoems, but I donotfindtime.Iamdoingthisworkbutmymindisstillworkingonthepoems.Evenwhen I was takingmymilk,Iwasbusywithinsiftingthepointsforthepoems.OnlywhenIfinishthe poems will my mind know rest.

Are youallkeepinganote-booktorecordyourthoughts?Firstofallyoushouldnotedowninthis book allthenewpointsthatyoulearnintheclass.Thentherearepareallelideasthatmightstrike you; orideasarisingoutofthoseexpressedbyothersintheclass.Thesemaybenew,noveland unknown to others. These should at once be noted down. Are you keeping such note-books? Evil should not have time to dwell in your mind. What if someone refuses to give you milk, to give you food? What if someone scolds you? Always repeat: "I am not this body; I am not this mind; I am the eternal immortal satchidananda atman".

Bear insult and injury. If someone slaps you on your cheeks, you should not even mind it; you should not even be aware of it, so to say. This is very difficult. But this is most important. When the other man is scolding you, your mind should be engaged in vichara. After a while this man will realise: "What is this? I have been scolding him several times; he does not get irritated; he does not retort. There must be something in him, which I should learn." Then he will fall at your feet and apologise. You have conquered.

That which draws out this hidden consciousness of atman, is the highest knowledge. The teachings that break your bondage and bestow on you freedom, are the teachings of the ancient rishis (sages) which lay bare the mysteries of the universe. On the dawn of true knowledge the veil ofignoranceisliftedandwithitallillusoryappearanceofphenomenaissublated.Whatis left isonlytheperceivingself,thenegatorofallnegations-whichisnootherthanBrahman, existence, knowledge, bliss absolute.

21 OCTOBER - PERFECTION

The essential qualificationforasadhu(manofrenunciation)isthatheshouldadapthimselftoall conditions andcircumstances,causingnoinconveniencetoothers.Hisisthedutytoserve-not to worry others.Veryfewsadhusknowwhattheyareandwhattheyshouldbe. This

morninganoldsadhufromSwargAshramcamehere.HewastherewhenIwasthere,too. He is aged80now.Todaytheydidnotpreparerotihere.Therewasonlyriceandcurry.But,the sadhu wouldnottake.Hewantedonlyroti(bread).Itseemsricewillproducewind.Ifyouallow him, he willlecturetoyouforhalfanhourontheevileffectsofrice-eating.Buthewillrefuseto be remindedthataverylargepopulationinIndiaandtheworldlivesonricealone. This

isallthathehasunderstoodofsadhana(spiritualpractice)duringallthesethirtyyearsof sadhulife:"Riceshouldnotbetaken:rotialoneisgoodforhealthandmeditation."Alltheirlife thesepeoplewillwasteonthisonethoughtoftherightfoodandthewrongfood.Whatisthere if onedayyoudonotgetyourfoodtoyourownliking.Evenyourownwifewillnottolerateyou for a day if you are so particular about what food you should have.

Itisthespecialdutyofasadhunottocauseanyinconveniencetohouseholders.Wearenotto beaburdenonhouseholders,buttobeofsomeservicetothem.Whenwillthesadhuunderstand this. Somesadhakas(seekers),herealsohavethatimpressionthattheyarelivinginanasramaand that oneconsiderationoughttobesufficienttoopenoutthegatesofKaivalya(liberation)to them.Iassureyou:evenifttheylivemanyhundredsoftheirlivesnearthegreatestsaintinthe world,theywillnotimproveevenabit.Theymustthemselvesexert.Eachonemustthinkfor himself,actforhimself.Therehavebeensomesadhakasherewhomlmyselftrustandputin chargeoftheaffairsoftheasrama-thenImyselfusedtodreadtoapproachthem.If,forinstance, I gotothemandaskthemtopreparealittlemoreofwhattheygivemeformyfoodinorderthat I maygivetheextraquantitytosomeoneelse,Iwouldberefused.WhatIdoonthoseoccasions is toreducemyownconsumptionanddistributethistotheothers. If

asadhakagetsrealsamadhi(superconsciousness)inahundredbirths,thatisaverygreat achievement.Godisperfect;andunlessanduntilalltheevilqualitiesareeradicatedanddivine qualities acquired to the degree of perfection, there will be no samadhi.

22 OCTOBER - THE SADHANA THAT HARDENS

(A letter was on Siva's table: a great European yogi had written to Siva requesting him to invite him to India. This was needed to obtain a passport.)

What a big show of themselves do these so-called saints make. Flying from this country to that country: everywhere they go, parties, receptions and farewell parties, again. It is not?

Some of them should be received with a unique honour. Instead of flags and festoons adorning the reception entrance, people should hang old shoes and broomsticks.

We should not wait for the thing to happen actually. We should train ourselves. I have done so. I have beaten myself with shoes severely. This I used to do especially on birthdays - just after returning to my kutir after the meetings where people will praise me, glorify me, deify me, I will go into My kutir and beat myself nicely with a pair of shoes: "What are you? You wretched flesh-blood-excreta made body? Do you want garlands? Can you not wear torn clothes? Do you think that you are great? Do you want to be prostrated to? Now, take these garlands."

Sukha Deva was tested by Janaka like this. He was a great jnani. When he went to Janaka for instruction, he was made to wait outside the palace uncared for, without food, without shelter and without any honour. Then he was attended upon by the ladies of the court and the Maharanis. In these ways Janaka tested Suka Deva's tranquility of mind. Suka was above all these things. He had preserved his equanimity all through. Such should be a sadhaka.

I have heard this said of St. Francis of Assisi also. He used to call his body Mr. Ass. What a tremendous vairagya they all had.

Even this occasional shoe-beating is not enough for me. I should give this body a dose of this hardening-medicine at least once a week.

23 OCTOBER - WORDS OF WISDOM

One's individual ego, preconceived notions, pet ideas, prejudices and selfish interests should be given up. All these stands in the way of spiritual progress. Lord's grace begins to work only when you learn to discipline yourself, subordinate your selfishness and surrender fully to him.

Why dost thou try to find thy God in deities and temples when thou has kept thy visible gods standing outside, hungry and naked? Regarding Him as manifest everywhere thou shouldst serve all creatures with intense bhava if thou wishest to attain the highest perfection. Indeed, thy love towards the Lord should engender love for the whole universe - for thou must see Him in all.

Kindle the light of love in thy heart for love is the immediate way to the kingdom of God, the vast domain of perennial peace and joy. Where there is love there is peace. Where there is peace there is love. Life and death are the two scenes in the drama of life. All is passing; all is sorrow; all is pain; all is unreal.

This world is merely a play of colours and sounds. Hence, O man, seek the permanent, the all-blissful, the real, which is ever-shining in the chambers of thy heart, which is self-luminous, infinite, unchanging and eternal. Moksha (liberation) means nothing but the destruction of the impurities of the mind. The mind becomes pure when all desires and fears are annihilated. Lead the divine life. Light the lamp of divine life everywhere.

Thy aim should be to maintain an unshakable sweetness of disposition, to be pure and gentle and to be happy in all circumstances. To be always conscious of the divine, always to feel the divine presence, to live always in the awareness of the supreme being in the chambers of your heart and everywhere around you is verily to live a life of fullness and divine perfection, even whilst on earth.

This body is a lamp. The heartis the wick. The oil is your love for the Lord. You can build a temple in your heart by the absenceof anger, by the practice of humility, compassion, forgiveness, faith, devotion, meditation, prayerand recitation of the Lord's name.

24 OCTOBER - MAYA

There is nodualityinreality.Allmodificationisillusory,Multiplicityisanillusion. Maya (theillusorypoweroftheLord)projectsmultiplicity.Mayacreatesdivision-division between the individual soul and the supreme soul.

Maya isatremendous,delusivepowerofGod.Mayaisthematerialstuffofthisworld.Mayais the sourceofthephysicaluniverse.Thisworldofnamesandformsisafalseshowkeptupbythe juggleryofmaya.Justasastickburningatoneend,whenwavedroundquickly,producesan illusionofacircleoffire,soisitwiththemultiplicityoftheworld.Mayadeludesus.Mayacreates havocinthemind.Thethingsthatweperceiveallroundusareonlymindinformorsubstance. The worldisaproductofthemind.ThewholeWorldisanexpansionofthemind.Theentire universearisesandexistsinthemind.Nothingoftheworldisoutsidethemind.Earth,mountains and rivers-allarefragmentsofthemind,appearingasitwere,toexistoutside.Theworlddoes not existbyitself.Itisnotseenwithouttheaidofthemind.Itdisappearswhenthemindceases to function,asindeepsleep.

It is imaginationalonethatassumestheformsoftime,spaceandmotion.Spaceandtimehave no independentstatusapartfromBrahmanortheself,whichispureawareness.Thereisnospace without time, andthereisnotimewithoutspace.Spaceandtimegotogether.Spaceandtime are interdependent.Theyarebothunreal.Timeandspacearementalprojections,asunrealas dreams. Howeverrealtheymayseemtobe,theyarenotultimatelyreal.Timeless,spaceless Brahman is theonlyreality.

Brahman aloneis.ItisBrahmanalonethatshinesastheworldofvariegatedobjects,likewater differentiatedbythewavesintomanykindsoffoam,bubbles,etc.Brahmanappearsastheworld when cognisedthroughthemindandthesenses.

Maya concealsthetruthandpresentsanerror-itveilstherealityandshowstheworld.Mistaking the body for atmanortheselfiscalledmaya.Mayascreenstheknowledgeofatmanandtherefore man mistakesonefortheother.Thisisthecauseofbondage-wehavetheerroneous consciousnessthatweareobjectivebeings,thatouractionsareobjectiveexpressionsprojected in time and space.

25 OCTOBER - WORLD IS THE BODY OF GOD

The universe is a mirror in which is reflected the being and beauty of God. God's universe is ruled by his eternal laws. In the East, the law of cause and effect is called the law of karma. In the New Testament it is expressed in the words: "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." What is written is written and no man can change the eternal plan. That which is decreed by God's will occurs on this earth. There is system, method, order, regularity everywhere in this universe because the universe is, ultimately governed by God.

This world is the body of the Lord. This world, though it really is not, appears to be. Know that it is nothing but a reflection. When you know the rope, the snake-knowledge disappears. Even so the world does not really exist and yet appears to be existing through ignorance. It disappears with the knowledge of the atman on which the illusion of the world is superimposed. In Brahman or the absolute, this world shines falsely, owing to ignorance. It is not true, even as dreams under the influence of sleep. It is because of illusory superimposition on the part of the individual that the empirical names and forms appear to be real. When, by the power of meditation, the effect (world) is negated as unreal, the cause (Brahman) also ceases to be a cause. The certitude or conviction that the universe is not the supreme Brahman is itself avidya (ignorance). Hence the certitude that, "The universe is Brahman alone", is emancipation.

The world is a spirit manifested in space and time. When you look at the absolute, through the senses, it appears as the universe. The puryastaka (body) is composed of the eight - that is mind, egoism, intellect and the five objects of the senses (sound, sight etc.). All these, composed of the five elements, are appearances only. So also is time through right discrimination. In this mortal world, everything perishes, but the ideas and the ideals do not perish. Ideas are more enduring than objects, which are perishable, but atman, the immortal soul endures forever. Just as the universe appears dark to the blind, and shining to those who have eyes to see, so it appears blissful to the sages and painful to the ignorant.

26 OCTOBER - IGNORANCE

The mindisacreationofavidya!(ignorance)anditistheeffectofavidya.Themindisfilledwith delusion - this is why it tempts you and makes you go astray. If you can destroy the cause of the mind bygettingknowledgeofthesupremeself,themindisnowhere;itdwindlesintoanairy nothing.

The wholeexperienceofduality,madeupofperceiverandperceived,ispureimagination.There is no ignoranceapartfromthemind.Onthedestructionofthemind,allisdestroyed.Themind's activity isthecauseofallappearance.Onaccountofillusionyouthinkthattheoutsideobjects are separatefromyouandreal.

As longasthereismindthereareallthesedistinctions-bigandsmall,highandlow,superiorand inferior, good and bad, etc., - but the highest truth is that there is no relativity. If you can transcend the mindbyconstantandprofoundmeditationonatmanyouwillbeabletoattainastatebeyond the pairsofoppositeswhereinliessupremepeaceandhighestknowledge.

The firstthoughtisthe'I-thought'.Asthis'I-thought'isthebaseofallotherthoughts,egoismis the seedforthemind.Theideaof'I'bringsinitstraintheideaoftime,spaceandotherpotencies. With theseenvironments,thename'jiva'(soul)accruestoit.Andcontemporaneouslywithit there arisebuddhi(intellect),memoryandmanas(mind)whichistheseedofthetreeofdesire.

You cannotrealiseGodifyouhavetheslightesttraceofegoism,orattachmenttonameandform, or theleasttingeofworldlydesireinthemind.Trytominimiseegoismlittlebylittle.Rootitout by self-sacrifice,bykarmayoga,byself-surrender,orbyvedanticself-enquiry.Wheneveregoism asserts itself, raise the question within yourself: "What is the source of this little 'I"? Again and again askthisquestionand,asyouremovelayerafterlayer,theoniondwindlestonothing.

Analyse the little 'I' and it becomes a non-entity.

The egoistheLordforwhoseentertainmentthedanceisperformedandtheobjectsofthesenses are hiscompanions.Theintellectisthedancinggirlandthesensesarethepersonswhoplayon the instrumentswhichaccompanythedance.Thesakshi(witnessingsoul)isthelampwhich illumines the scene. Just as the lamp, without moving from its place, furnishes light to all parts - so too, thesakshifromitsunchangeablepositionilluminseverythingsituatedinsideoroutside.

27 OCTOBER - BODY IS NOT I

This is a world of diversity. Intellects are different; faces are different; sounds are different; religions are different; faiths are different. Colours are different; faculties are different tastes and temperaments are different. But one thing is common to all - every one of us wants nitya sukha (eternal happiness), infinite knowledge, immortality, independence and freedom. These things can be attained by knowledge of the self alone.

Everybody wants happiness that is not mixed with sorrow and pain but he does not know where he can get this supreme bliss. The best means to acquire this knowledge is by the enquiry, "Who am I?" This has the potentiality of producing the quiescence of mind which will enable it to wade through this ocean of samsara (cycle of birth and death). It demands a sharp, subtle, pure intellect, bold understanding and gigantic will. The commonplace 'I' that everyone is glibly talking about and relishing acutely every moment of his life, from the babbling baby to the garrulous old man, must be clearly understood.

The physical body is not the 'I', it is the product of food - it lives on food and dies without food. It is a bundle of skin, flesh, fat, bones, marrow, blood and a lot of other filthy things. It does not exist before birth or after death. It lasts for a short intervening period. It is transient. It undergoes changes such as childhood, youth and old age. It has six changes - existence, birth, growth, modification, decay and death. It is not of one homogeneous essence; it is manifold, insentient, inert. It is an object of perception like a chair or a table. You continue to live even when hands and legs have gone.

How can the body be the self-existent, eternally pure atman, the knower, the silent witness of the changes that take place in the body and in all things, the inner ruler of all ?

You have learned that body and mind are not 'I'.

You have learned that prana is not 'I'.

The world is unreal, this thou hast understood.

Thou hast understood that Brahman alone is real.

Now meditate on the formula - 'I am Brahman'.

Lose thyself, unite with him.

Rest there peacefully, joyfully.

This is the proper place, the abode of the pure.

28 OCTOBER - AM I THE I?

You say, "This ismybody"-thisindicatesthatyouaredifferentfromthebodyandthebodyis your instrument.Youareholdingitjustasyouholdawalkingstickinyourhand.

In sleep youexistindependentofthewalkingstickinyourhand(body).Indreamsyouoperate through theastralbodywithouthavinganyconcernforthefleshybody.Throughignoranceyou have identifiedyourselfwiththephysicalbodyandmistakenitforthereal'I'whichisever-pure, all-pervading,self-existent,self-luminousandself-contained,whichhasneitherbeginningnor end, which ischangeless,beyondtime,spaceandcausation,andwhichexistsinthepastthe present and thefuture.

Prana (vital force)isnot'I'.Itistheeffectofrajas(energy).Itisinert.Itcannotwelcomeaman while you areasleep,thoughitisflowing.Itincreasesanddecreases.Yousay,"Myprana"-this shows you aredifferentfromprana.Itisyourinstrumentonly.Youcancontrolthebreathby pranayama. Thecontrollerisdifferentfromthecontrolled(prana).Pranaisnot'I'.

Mind also is not'I'.Itgropesindarkness.Itborrowslightfromahigherpower.Itgetspuzzledand confused. Duringshockandfearitbecomesinsentient.Itistheeffectofsatva.Itisyour instrument. Yousay,"mymind"-thereforemindisdifferentfrom'I'.Itisfullofchangingideas.It has a beginningandanend.Youcancontrolthemindandthethoughts-thecontrollerisdifferent from the controlled(mind).Itisasmuchyourproperty,andoutsideofyou,asyourlimbsetc.,or dress, chair, etc.Insleepthereisnomindyetyouwakeupwithafeelingofcontinuityof consciousness. Thereisnomindindeliriumorcomayet'I'remains.Mindisabundleofthoughts and all thoughtsarecentredaroundthefalseegoisticlittle'I'.Therootthoughtofallthese thoughts is the 'I'thatisfullofvanities.

Talking of myself,Ialwaysspeakof'I'.ThesheathsinwhichIamhappy,old,black,asanyasi (monk), etc., areincidentsinthecontinuityofthe'I'.Theyareeverchangingandvaryingbutthe 'I' remains the same-unchangingamidthechanging.

29 OCTOBER - BRAHMAN AND MAYA

Likethepotandclay,wavesandthesea,ornamentsofgoldandgold,theuniverseisnon-different fromBrahman.Thecausedoesnotloseitsbeingbyappearingastheeffect.Theworldisnotan illusion,butitisnon-differentfromBrahman.Likeheatisinseparablefromfireandidenticalwith it, sotheuniversewhichisofthenatureofBrahmanisidenticalwithit.Theworldisdependent on Brahmanandindependentlytheworldisnothing.Theplayofchit(consciousness)aloneshines as thisuniverse.Theuniversewas,isandalwayswillbe.Thereisnobeginningorendtocreation.

Behindtheimpermanentmaterialworldthereistheinvisiblesourceofallthings,pure, unchangingspiritoratman.InthepresenceofGod,maya(illusion)createstheworld,evenasin thepresenceofthesuperiorofficer,thesubordinatesdotheirwork.Justasacarpentercannot workwithouttheinstruments,andtheinstrumentsthemselves,alsocannotdoanyworkwithout thecarpenter,soalso,Ishvara(God)cannotcreatetheworldwithoutmaya,norcanmayacreate the world without Ishvara.

Thisworldisanoverflowoftheloveof God.Thisistheviewofabhakta(devotee).Thisworldis an overflowoftheblissofBrahman.Thisistheviewofavedantinorsage.Loveandblissareone; GodandBrahmanareone.Thisworldisnothingbuttheexpressionof God'sloveforHimself.This worldisanexpressionormanifestationofGod.Itistheoutcomeofthespontaneousplayoflove and joy. God expands Himself and manifests as the world.

Atmicsankalpa(thewilloftheself)makesthisuniverseshineandconstitutesit.Everyobjectis surchargedwithdivinesignificance.Everythinginthisworldhasgotaspiritualmessagetoconvey. Learnfromeverything.AllisBrahman.Whenthistruthisintellectuallyrecognisedandintuitively realised, then all feelings of differences end forever.

30OCTOBER-BRAHMAN

Whateverhasabeginningoranendisunreal.That which exists in the past, the present and the future isreal.OnlyBrahmanexistsinthesethreeperiods of time. Hence Brahman alone is real. The realityunderlyingallnamesandforms,theprimal one from which everything originates is Brahman,theabsolute.Brahmanisthesoulofalljoy, all bliss. Brahman transcends phenomena. Productionanddestructionareonlyphenomena,the jugglery of the mind or maya (illusion).

Brahmanisinfinite,eternal,immortal.Infinityisone - only that which is unchanging, indivisible, non-dual,beginningless,endless,timeless,spaceless, causeless, can be infinite. There can be no parts, nodifferences,nodistinctionsinBrahman.

Brahmanisself-luminous,self-existent,self-contained, self-established, self-revealed. Brahman illuminesitselfbyitself;byitsnatureitiseverillumined. Individual souls and the world are unreal - nothingsaveBrahmaniseternal.

Immortality,knowledge,blisspurity,independence, perfection, etc., constitute the very nature of Brahman.Heresidesinyourheart.Hewitnesses the activity of the buddhi (intellect). Word, speech,mouth,maynotapproachBrahman.Mind also cannot go there. Supreme Brahman is impersonal,formless,all-pervadingandsubtle-but he can be reached through meditation, throughtheeyeofintuition,byonewhohaspurified himself and who is endowed with the four means of salvation.

Godcannotbeseenwiththephysicaleyes-buthe reveals himself to His devotees. He is one thoughcalledbycountlessnames.Realisethereality of the one existence, the one life that throbs in allatoms,inallbeings-theonepowerthatcreates, sustains and dissolves this universe.

WhentheheartofthedevoteeisunitedintheLord, no difference between them remains.

BeforesaturatingthemindwiththoughtsofBrahman you will have to assimilate divine ideas first.

Rememberthistripletalways:Assimilation-Saturation - Realisation.

31 OCTOBER - ATMAN

The atman (self) is most ancient, hard to perceive and abides secretly in the innermost cave of the heart or intellect. This atman or supreme soul fills all with his radiance. This atman is incorporeal, pure, invulnerable. He is untouched by evil. The atman is the supreme seer and thinker, immanent and transcendental. This atman is the immortal spirit, the common, unifying entity present in all. You live, because the supreme atman is. You understand, because the atman is intelligence. You enjoy, because the atman is bliss.

Atman is the reality itself - it is of the nature of pure consciousness. It is undifferentiated, pure awareness and pure experience. Atman is secondless; it alone is; all else which appears to be is not.

Atman is the one which appears divided; the changeless as full of change; the timeless as temporal; the infinite as extended and fragmented in space. Atman is one. It is the root, the reality itself. Atman is pure consciousness, calm and infinite like the waveless ocean. That atman which is impersonal, changeless, like unto space, by nature purity itself - verily, verily, that am I. The one who is the eternal, the atman, exists. He is all in all. This atman is so mysterious that it cannot easily be grasped. This atman can easily be grasped when the science of the self (brahmavidya) is taught by a guru who has attained self-realisation.

This atman is subtler than the subtlest and so is not attained by arguments. Like butter hidden in milk, this mysterious atman is hidden in every being. Realise this atman by the churning of meditation. The atman is unborn, ageless, immortal, deathless and fearless. He who knows this atman becomes Brahman, the fearless.

Atman is Brahman - absolute, infinite, the supreme being. It is existence absolute, knowledge absolute, bliss absolute. It is self-delight and self-knowledge. It is bodiless, formless and without gunas, all-pervading, all-full, imperishable. It has neither beginning nor end. It exists in past, present and future. It is self-existent, the source for body, mind, senses, prana, the vedas and the universe itself. No one can deny it; it is the inner self of all beings.

1 NOVEMBER - SELF-REALISATION

There is no other duty for man except meditation on the self. Dismissing all else, one should establish oneself in the self. There remains nothing to be done or attained when the self is experienced. For that Brahman the immortal is before, behind, to the right and to the left and stretched forth above and below.

Brahman is all this. The real alone is an enduring being and this real is experienced through meditation coupled with knowledge. Whatever a man of purified mind makes clear in his mind, and whatever desires he desires, that he gets and that he fulfills. One should therefore have pure and perfect resolves.

The supreme self is experienced in the fourth state of consciousness. It is neither this nor that - it has no quality in particular and yet it is everything. It is peaceful, blessed and non-dual. It is the cessation of all phenomena. It is the atman that should be known and realised. That is the purpose of life. The liberated sage experiences that he is everything - the tree, the mountain, the sun. He is the food and the eater of the food. He is the knower, the knowledge and the known, in one. He is the whole universe in himself.

Bliss is the ultimate nature of reality - from bliss all this comes forth. All the bliss of the world is only a shadow of self-bliss. The self is the source of all bliss - it is everything - all knowledge and all bliss. All this is based on consciousness and is guided by consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman. I am Brahman. That thou art. This self is Brahman. Only the infinite is bliss. There one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else. That is the infinite fullness.

The self is an ocean without a shore and a surface. It is merely existence, consciousness and bliss. When there is duality one can speak to the other, but when everything is but one's own self then who can speak to whom? Who can see whom?

Atman is pure consciousness - it is the unchanging witness. It is realized within your heart as existence, knowledge, bliss absolute. Realise this atman within the temple of your own heart and enjoy immortal bliss.

2 NOVEMBER - SATCHIDANANDA

Brahman is satchidananda. Sat is truth - that which exists in the past, the present and the future - which has no beginning, middle or end - which is self-existent, self-created - which never changes. In truth the world abides, from the truth the world comes forth and in truth the world dissolves. Truth is the only substance that underlies and pervades this world of beings. Truth is, and gives immortality and fearlessness.

Chit is self-knowledge. There are no indriyas (senses) in cit. It is self-luminous and imparts light to the mind, intellect, senses and the skin of the body, the sun, moon, stars, fire, lightning and all objects.

Ananda is bliss itself. There is no enjoyer in ananda. It is enjoyment itself.

When you are in the company of women, say: "There is satchidananda atman in all these names and forms. Names and forms are false. They have no independent existence. Their support is the one satchidananda atman." Lust will vanish; sex ideas will disappear. Practise, feel and realise this truth. One grain of practice is better than a ton of theory. Practice is better than precept.

The snake in the rope vanishes when you bring a lamp. So also the illusion of the body and the world disappears with the advent of the sun of wisdom. All fears, miseries, and troubles melt away. You have regained your original pristine glory.

Pure consciousness is Brahmanor the absolute - it is always the witnessing subject. It can never become the object of perception - it is always the knower. Mind can only know the external objects. How can mind, effect,know the cause, Brahman? How can the finite know the infinite? How can mind know the knower? You cannot jump on your shoulders. Fire cannot burn itself. If atman becomes the object ofperception, it will become a finite object. The denier of the pure consciousness does always exist(sat) - he is just like the man who denies or doubts his tongue when he is talking. This provesBrahman always exists. Existence is pure consciousness (chit). Pure consciousness is also immortalbliss (ananda)

3NOVEMBER-TIME IS A TRICK

Time is themodeofthemind.Itisamentalcreation. Time is a trick of the mind. It is an illusion. Brahman isbeyondtime.Itiseternity.Gobeyond time and rest in the timeless, eternal, imperishable Brahman.

'Up anddown','withinandwithout','highandlow', 'big and small', 'thin and stout', 'virtue and vice', 'goodandbad','pleasureandpain','hereand there', are all relative terms. They are mental creationsonly.Upwillbecomedownanddownwill become up. This stick is small when compared to thatbigstick,butthatbigstickwillbecomesmall when compared with an even bigger stick! Withinwillbecomewithoutandwithoutwillbecome within.

Whatisgoodatonetimeisbadatanothertime. What is good for one man is bad for another man.Whatisdharmaforoneisadharmaforanother and, what is dharma at one time is not dharma at another time.

Brahmanisneitherthinnorstout,neitherbignor small. In Brahman there is neither within nor without,neithervirtuenorvice,neitherpleasure nor pain, good nor bad. It is a homogeneous essenceofblissandknowledgewherethereisno play of the mind, neither time nor space, east nor west,pastnorfuture,ThursdaynorFriday.

Tomorrowbecomestodayandtodaybecomesyesterday. Future becomes present and present becomesthepast.Whatisallthis?Thisisacreation or trick of the mind only. In God, everything is in thepresentonly;itishereonly.

There isneithernightnorday,yesterdaynortomorrow in the sun. It is the mind that has created time andspace.Whenyouarehappytimepasses quickly. When you are unhappy time hangs heavily. All this is only a relative world.

Life is notaquestionofcreedsbutofdeedswelldone. No life is free from difficulties - it is a series of conflicts.Facethemboldlythroughthegraceof the Lord and the power of his name. Change is the lawoflife.Truthisthelawoflife.Loveisthe fulfilling of the law of life. Death is the gate to another life.Lifeisendless.

4 NOVEMBER - VIVEKA

Viveka is discriminationbetweentherealandtheunreal,permanentandimpermanent,selfand the not-self. VivekadawnsinamanonaccountofthegraceofGod.Thegracecancomeonly when one hasdoneincessantselflessserviceincountlessbirthswiththefeelingofIshvararpana (offering untoGod).Thedoorofthehighermindisflungopenwhenthereisawakeningof discrimination.Thereisanunchangingpermanentprincipleamidsttheever-changing phenomena oftheuniverseandthefleetingmovementsandoscillationofmind.

The five sheathsarefloatingintheuniversalconsciousnesslikestrawonwater.Thefivechanging koshas (sheaths)aremixedupwiththeeternalatman(self).Thereischildhood,boyhood, adolescenceandoldageforthisphysicalbody.Butthereisanunchangingbackgroundforthis ever-changingbodyandmind,liketheblackboardorscreeninacinemawhichmanifestsvarious forms andfigures.Thewitnessorthesilentspectatorofthesechangesofthebodyandmindis permanentandunchanging.Heisliketheall-pervadingspace.Hepervades,permeatesand interpenetratesallthesechangingformslikethethreadinagarlandofflowers.Thiseternal essenceofatmanispresenteverywhereandineverything-atoms,electrons,mustard,nayin ants andmountains.Hedwellsinthechambersofyourownheart.Heisthesoulofthistree, stone,flower,goat,dog,cat,man,saintorDevata(God).Heisthecommonpropertyofall,behe a saintorasinner,akingorapeasant,abeggarorabaron,ascavengeroracobbler.Heisthe very sourceforlifeandthought.

The aspirantshouldlearntodiscriminatebetweentheeternalandunchangingsubstratumofall objects andtheever-changingnamesandforms.Heshouldseriouslyengagehimselfatalltimes to separatetheeternalunchangingself.Heshouldtrytoseparatehimselffromthechanging, impermanentfivesheaths,fromthepassions,emotions,feelings,thoughts,sentiments,nayfrom the oscillatingminditself.Heshoulddistinguishbetweenthemindandthewitnesswhomoves and illuminesthemind,betweenordinarysensation,feelingsandsentimentsandperfect awareness ofpureconsciousnesswhichremainsunaffectedandunattached,betweenpersonality and individuality.Hemustalsoseparatehimselffromtheadventitiousfalsesuperimpositionsof the body, viz.,position,rank,avocation,birth,caste,stage,andorderoflife.Theseareall accidental appendagesofthefalsepersonality.

5 NOVEMBER - MEDITATE ON THESE FOR WISDOM

The aspirant should separate himself also from the sad-urmis (six waves in the ocean of samsara (worldly life), viz., birth and death, hunger and thirst, exhilaration and grief). Birth and death, belong to the physical body; hunger and thirst belong to the prana (life); exhilaration and grief are the attributes of the mind. The soul is unattached. The six waves cannot touch the atman (self) which is subtle like the all-pervading ether. He should also separate himself from the indriyas (senses). He should not take upon himself the functions of the indriyas. He should stand as a spectator and witness of the activities of the mind, prana and the indriyas. The indriyas and the mind are like iron pieces in contact with a magnet. They function by borrowing the light and power from the source the eternal Atman.

Meditation on the following slokas (verses) of and on the special formulae of Sri Sankara will pave a way in the development of your viveka (wisdom) and in separating yourself from the illusory vehicles, viz. indriyas prana, mind and the five sheaths.

The formulae of Sri Sankaracharya are, "Brahman (the eternal) alone is truth - this world is unreal; the jiva (soul) is identical with Brahman". The Gita says, "The unreal hath no being; the real never ceaseth to be; the truth about both hath been perceived by the seers of the essence of things". (Chapter II - Verse 16). Reflection on this sloka will infuse viveka.
I do not do anything - so should the harmonised one think, who knoweth the essence of things. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing the eyes, he knows that the senses move among the objects of the senses." (Chapter V - Verses 8,9). You can separate yourself from the indriyas by meditating upon the meaning of these shlokas.

All actions are wrought by the qualities of nature only. The self, deluded by egoism, thinketh, 'I am the doer. But he, who knoweth the essence of the divisions of the qualities and functions holding that 'the qualities' move amid the qualities, is not attached. "By meditating upon these two shlokas you can separate yourself from the three gunas (qualities of nature). "He who seeth that prakriti (nature) verily performeth all actions and that the self is actionless, he seeth." (Chapter XIII - Verse 2).

6 NOVEMBER - BE FIRM IN WISDOM

Viveka (wisdom)givesinnerstrengthandmentalpeace.Aviveki(wiseone) gets no troubles. He is always onthealert.Henevergetsentangledinanything.Hehasfar-sightedness. He knows the true value oftheobjectsofthisuniverse.Heisfullyawareoftheworthlessness of these shallow toys. Nothing,nothingcantempthim.Maya(illusion)cannotapproachhim now.

Associationswithmahatmas(holyones)andstudyofvedanticliteraturewill infuse viveka in man. Viveka shouldbedevelopedtothemaximumdegree;oneshouldbewellestablished in it; viveka should notbeanephemeraloroccasionalmoodinanaspirant.Itshouldnot fail him when he is in trouble,whenanydifficultystareshimintheface.Itmustindeedbecome part and parcel of his nature.Heshouldexerciseitatalltimeswithoutanyeffort.Ifoneiscareless in the beginning, viveka maycomeandgo.Sotheaspirantshouldliveinthecompanyofsages for a long time till viveka burnsinhimlikeabigsteadyflame.

Maya is verypowerful.Shetriesherextremelevelbesttoleadtheaspirant astray. She throws many temptationsandobstaclesonthepathofyounginexperiencedaspirants. Therefore the company ofsagesandmahatmasislikeanimpenetrablefortressforthe neophyte. Now no temptationscanassailhim.Hewillundoubtedlydeveloptrueandlastingviveka. He will then have permanent and spontaneous viveka.

Then onlyheistrulyandperfectlysafe.Thedangerouszoneispast.Onlya true viveki can claim to be therichest,happiestandmostpowerfulmanintheworld.Heisarare spiritual gem. He is a beacon-lightandtorchbearer.Ifvivekaisdevelopedallotherqualifications will come by themselves. From viveka is born vairagya (dispassion).

Discriminationisthefacultywhichdistinguishesbetweentherealandthe unreal. The whole world outsideandtheuniversethatisinside,areunreal.Earth,water,wind, fire, the sky, the ocean, our bodiesandthevitalforceanimatingthem,ourminds,ourconsciousness of ourselves -all are but airynothingness.Theonlyrealthingistheatman(self)orBrahman, the absolute.

7NOVEMBER - VAIRAGYA

There is a way to theimmortalabodeand supreme happiness. There is a way to the fourth dimension. That wayisvairagya.Followthe way. Vairagya is dispassion, desirelessness or non-attachment. It is indifferencetosensualobjects herein and hereafter. It is born of and sustained by, right discrimination.

Vairagya istheoppositeofattachmentwhich binds a man to the wheel of births and deaths; vairagya liberatesamanfrombondage.Vairagya purifies the sensual mind and turns it inward. It is the mostimportantqualificationforaspiritual aspirant. Without it, no spiritual life is possible.

The twocurrentsofthemind-attractionand repulsion - really constitute the world of births and deaths.Aworldlymanisaslaveofthesetwo mighty currents and is tossed about hither and thitherlikeapieceofstraw.Hesmileswhen experiencing pleasure; he weeps when in pain. He clingstopleasantobjectsandrunsawayfrom those which cause pain.

Whereverthereissensationofpleasure,the mind gets glued, as it were, to the object that gives pleasure.Thisiswhatiscalledattachmentand brings only bondage and pain. When the object is withdrawn,orwhenitperishes,themindsuffers unspeakable pain. Attraction is the root-cause for humansuffering.

A dispassionatemanhasadifferenttraining and has different experience altogether. He is a pastmaster intheartorscienceofseparating himself from the impermanent, perishable objects. He has absolutelynoattractionforthem and constantly dwells in the eternal. He stands adamantine asapeakamidstaturbulentstorm, as a spectator of this wonderful world-show. A dispassionatemanhasnoattractionforpleasant objects and no repulsion for painful ones. Nor is he afraid ofpain.Heknowswellthatpain helps considerably in his progress and evolution, in his journey towardsthegoal.Heisconvinced that pain is the best teacher.

8NOVEMBER - REAL DISPASSION

The world is as unrealasashadow,bubble or froth. Why do you run after the toys of name and fame? How uncertainissensuallifeinthisillusory world! How transitory is sensual pleasure! Mark how many thousandsofpeoplewerecarried away in the recent earthquake! How many houses were destroyed!Yetpeoplewanttobuild seaside cottages and attain immortality there. How foolish they are!Self-deludedsouls!Pitiable is their lot! I pray for them. They are earthworms only, as they revelinfilth.MayGodbestow on them vairagya (dispassion), viveka (wisdom) and bhakti (devotion).

The vairagyathatcomesmomentarilyafter such incidents as the loss of some dearly beloved relative, or wealth,isknownaskaranavairagya. It will not help much in one's spiritual progress. The mind willbesimplywaitingtocatchhold of the sensual objects when an opportunity comes.

Vairagya, bornofdiscriminationisthepremonitory symptom of spiritual development. It will help the aspirant inhisspiritualupliftment.Ifyou develop vairagya, if you subdue your indriyas and shun the enjoymentsandpleasuresofthis world - as dung, as poison, as they are mixed with pain, sin, fear,craving,miseries,disease,old age and death - nothing can tempt you in this world. You will haveeternalpeaceandinfinitebliss. You will have no attraction for women and other earthly objects.Lustcannottakeholdofyou.

The body is thesourceofgreatmiseries.It is full of impurities. It brings disrespect, censure, etc. It is subject todiseases,decayandoldage. It passes away without a moment's notice.

Give up moha(attachment)forthebody.Think of the Atman (self) which is eternal, pure and all-pervading. Thethingsthatusedtoaffordyou delight before, give you displeasure now. That is the sign of vairagya.Theshadowofclouds,the friendship with a fool, the beauty of youth, wealth - all last only forashorttime.Vairagya(dispassion, indifference, non-attachment) is of two kinds. Karana vairagyaonaccountofsomemiseries and viveka purvak vairagya on account of discriminationbetweenrealandunreal.The mind of the former type of man is simply waiting for the opportunitytogetbackthethingsthat were given up. But the other man who gave up the objects on accountofvivekawillhavespiritual advancement. He will not have a downfall.

9NOVEMBER-ABANDON BODY-CONSCIOUSNESS

The physical bodyappearsonlyinthepresent. A thing which has neither past nor future must be considered as non-existentinthepresent also. If you think over deeply, with pure intelligence you will find atyantaabhava(completenon-existence) for the world.

This body whichisfullofimpurities,urine, pus and faecal matter etc., is perishable. It is like froth or bubble ormirage.Itisdespisedbyits enemies. It remains like a useless log of wood on the ground whenprana(life)leavesit.Itisthe cause of pain and suffering. It is your enemy. You should treat this bodywithcontempt,asdung. Why should you cling to it and worship it with scents, powders andflowers?Donotbesillyand foolish in adorning it with fine silks and ornaments. It is dire ignoranceonly.

"Nothing on thisearthbelongstome;this body is not mine" - this is wisdom. "He is my son; she is my daughter;sheismywife;thatbungalow is mine; that garden is mine; I am a brahmana; I am lean; I amfat"-thisisfoolishnessof a superior order. This physical body is the property of fishes, jackalsandvultures.Howcanyou call this yours?

Application ofsoaptothebody,oiltothe hair, powder to the face, looking in the mirror very often, wearingringsonthefingers-all these will intensify moha (attachment) for the body. Therefore giveupthesethingsruthlessly.

Will your sonordaughterorfriendorrelative help you when you are about to die? Have you got one sincere,unselfishfriendinthisworld? All are selfish. There is no pure love. But that Lord, your real friendoffriends,fatheroffathers, who dwells in your heart, will never forsake you though youforsakehim.Adoreinsilence that God of gods, Divinity of divinities, Highest of the highest. Mayheblessuswithhislove,wisdom, power and peace. Om!

Narayana Upanishadsays:"Inthebeginning these two roads were laid, the roads through karma (action) and sanyasa(renunciation).The latter consists in the renunciation of three-fold desire - of son, wealth andfame.Ofthesethe road through sanyasa is preferable. "The Taittiriya Upanishad also says:"Renunciation,tyaga, is certainly to be preferred."

10 NOVEMBER - WHERE IS REAL LOVE

The desire to attain knowledge of the self will dawn only in the person who is free from desires, who has a pure mind, and who is quite disgusted with this worldly life. Such a man only is competent to hear, meditate and attain Brahman, jnana or knowledge of Brahman. When the knowledge of the self dawns, ignorance, which is the seed for bondage and the cause of karma is totally eradicated and the aspirant attains immortality and eternal bliss.

Do not depend upon anybody. Rely on your own self. Be centred in the atman only. The sweet wife deserts her husband when he is on the roll of unemployment and marries another young man. The rich husband divorces his wife when she loses her beauty on account of Protracted illness and marries another woman. Even Lord Jesus and Buddha were forsaken by all their friends, followers and disciples. This is a strange world. Mysterious is maya (illusion)!

Real affection can be found in God and sages only. Worldly affection is only showy, hypocritical, illusory and changing. Just see whether your relatives, even your friends, your brothers and sisters show affection to you when you are unemployed, when you are suffering from a chronic, incurable disease and are without any money in your hands.

Saints and prophets who haverealisedGodare shouting at the tops of their voices that the Lord is dwelling in the hearts ofbeings,andyetno one is earnestly attemp-ting to make a vigorous search in his own heart. Isthisnotlamentable? God is above below, within, without and all around. Thirst for his darshan(vision).Lookwithin, practise introvision. Try earnestly to attain the immortal being. In Him, youcanfindeternal peace. Enter His kingdom right now in this very second. Stand firm on therockoftruthorBrahman. Have a firm grip of your reality, the self- luminous, immortal atmanorsoul.Lookupon this universe as your all-full form. Only when knowledge of the self dawnsinyourheartcan you free yourself from rebirth and become identical with the supreme self. Equipyourselfwiththe four means. Hear the srutis (scriptures), reflect, meditate and realise. May youbecomeasage!

11 NOVEMBER - FREEDOM FROM ATTACHMENT

Attachment produces infatuation and causes entanglement. Fear exists on account of attachment and desire. Infatuation or delusion is a stigma on pure love. Attachment to the objects of the world is due to ignorance of their true nature. Nothing but the atman (self) really exists. Objects are illusion. Attachment is indicative of the feeling that the objective possession brings happiness. This idea has to be removed from the mind.

Happiness is not in the objects but in one's own atman. Attachment is the impure vasana (feeling) of love or hate that is entertained by the mind for the diverse objects of this world. If you remain unaffected by joy, envy and sorrow, you have relinquished all attachments. If, without rejoicing in joy, or pining under pain, you do not subject yourself to the trammels of desire, then you can be said to have rid yourself of attachment.

If you can be content with whatever you get, then you have cast off attachment. Through attachment, desire for material objects arises. Renunciation of attachment is said to be moksha (release). Through its destruction all rebirth ceases. Destroy the association of the mind with the objects and attain the state of the jivanmukta (liberated soul).

Pleasure does not lie in the objects but in the condition of the mind. The mind goes out in search of pleasure. At the same time there is pain as the mind is straying away from the truth. When the object is attained, the mind ceases to function and rests on the atman, the substratum. Then it unconsciously tastes the bliss of the Atman.

Sublimate your inward longings through discrimination, dispassion, enquiry and meditation. You will attain supreme bliss. Develop vairagya (dispassion). Sharpen the intellect. Give up kutarka and viparita bhavana (distorted and perverted thinking). Identify yourself with the pure atman. You will soon attain knowledge of the self.

If you are careless and non-vigilant, if you are irregular in meditation, if your dispassion wanes, if you yield even a bit to sense pleasures, the mind will continue to go downward. Maya (illusion) closes in even upon a wise man if he stops his sadhana (practice) and meditation even for a short time.

Be careful. Be alert. Be regularin your meditation.

12 NOVEMBER - TRUE DISPASSION

Vairagya (dispassion) does not mean abandoning social duties and the responsibilities of life. It does not mean detachment from the world, or a life in a solitary cave of the Himalayas or in the cremation ground. It does not mean living on neem leaves, the wearing of matted hair and carrying a water-pot made of gourd or coconut shell in the hand. It does not mean shaving of the head and discarding one's clothes. Vairagya is mental detachment from all connections of the world.

Aman may remain in the world and discharge all the duties of his order and stage of life with detachment. He may be a householder. He may live with family and children. But at the same time, he may have perfect mental detachment from everything. He can perform his spiritual practice systematically. That man who has perfect mental detachment while remaining in the world is a hero, indeed. He is much better than a holy man who is living in a cave of the Himalayas, because the former has to face innumerable temptations at every moment of his life.

Wherever a man may go, he carries with him his fickle, restless mind, his desires and subconscious impressions. Even if he lives in solitude in the Himalayas, still he is the same worldly man if he is engaged in building castles in the air and in thinking of the objects of the world. In that case even the cave becomes a big city for him. If the mind remains quiet, if it is free from attachments, one can be perfectly dispassionate even while living in a mansion in the busiest part of a city like Calcutta. Such a mansion will be converted into a dense forest by him. Vairagya is purely a mental state.

Vairagya is a means for attaining wisdom of the self. It is not the goal itself. A realised sage has neither desire nor dispassion.If you give him a little dry bread, he is quite satisfied and will not grumble. If you give him thebest sweetmeats, milk and fruits, he will not refuse, but he will not be elated by good food. Hehas equanimity of mind and is above likes and dislikes. He always delights in his own self only,but not in external objects.

13 NOVEMBER - CONQUER THE WORLD WITHIN

He who has controlled his mind is really happy and free. Physical freedom is no freedom at all. If you are easily carried away by surging emotions and impulses, if you are under the grip of moods and cravings, how can you be really happy, O sweet beloved child? You are like a rudderless boat. You are tossed about hither and thither like a piece of straw in the vast expanse of ocean. You laugh for five minutes and weep for five hours. What can wife, son, friends, money, fame and power do for you when you are under the sway of the impulse of your mind?

He is a true hero who has controlled his mind. There is an adage: "He who has controlled his mind has controlled the world." True victory is victory over the mind. That is real freedom. A thorough rigorous discipline and self-imposed restrictions will eventually eradicate all desires, thoughts, impulses, cravings and passions. Only then and not until then can you expect to be free from the thraldom of the mind.

You should not give any leniency to the mind. The mind is a mischievous imp. Curb it by drastic measures. Become a perfect yogi . Money cannot give you freedom. Freedom is not a commodity that can be purchased. It is a rare, hidden treasure guarded by a five-hooded serpent. Unless you kill or tame this serpent, you cannot have access to this treasure. That treasure is spiritual wealth; that is freedom; that is bliss. The serpent is your mind. The five hoods are the five senses through which the mind serpent hisses.

The rajasic (restless) mind always wants new things. It wants variety. It gets disgusted with monotony. It wants change of place, change of food, change, in short, of everything. But you should train the mind to stick to one thing. You should not complain of monotony. You should have patience, adamantine will and undaunted persistence. Then only can you succeed in yoga. He who wants something new every now and then is quite unfit for yoga. You should stick to one place, one spiritual preceptor, one method of yoga and one institution. That is the way to positive success.

14 NOVEMBER - UPHILL TASK

True freedom results from the disenthralment of the mind. He is a real potentate and ruler who has conquered the mind. He who has conquered desires, passions and the mind is the richest man. If the mind is under control, it matters little whether you stay in a palace, or a cave in the Himalayas; whether you engage yourself in worldly activity or sit in silence. The mind can be controlled by untiring perseverance and great patience, equal to that of one engaged in emptying the ocean, drop by drop, with the tip of a blade of grass. To tame a lion or a tiger is far more easy than taming one's own mind. Tame your own mind first. Then you can tame the minds of others quite easily.

Constantly think of God. You can very easily control the mind. Constant thinking of God thins out the mind. The mind can very easily think of worldly objects. It is its nature. The mental force can easily flow in the old grooves and avenues of mundane thoughts. It finds it extremely hard to think of God and dwell on lofty thoughts.

The difficulty in weaning the mind from objects and fixing it on God is the same as in making the river Ganges flow uphill towards its source instead of its natural flow towards the ocean. Still, through strenuous efforts and renunciation, the mind must be trained to flow towards God, much against its will, if you want to free yourself from birth and death. There is no other way if you want to escape from worldly miseries and tribulations.

Introspect and always haveaninner life. Let a portion of the mind and the hands do their work mechanically. A girl acrobat,while exhibiting her performances, has her attention riveted on the water-pot she bears on herhead, although, all the time, she is dancing to various tunes. So does the truly pious man attendtoall his business concerns, but has his mind's eye fixed upon the blissful feet of the Lord. Thisisbalance and will lead to integral development.

15 NOVEMBER - RISE ABOVE THE TWO MOODS

In vedanta there are only two kinds of moods - joy, exultation or exhilaration and grief or depression. Now there is joy and five minutes later there is depression - the currents alternate. They belong to the sad Urmis (six waves, i.e. grief, delusion, hunger, thirst, decay and death). People of gloomy moods attract gloomy thoughts from others and from the akasic (etheric) records in the psychic ether. Persons with hope, cheerfulness and confidence attract similar thoughts from others - they are always successful in their attempts. People with negative moods of depression, anger and hatred do positive harm to others - and great damage in the thought world.

Try to eradicate depression through prayer, meditation, counter-thoughts of joy, chanting Om, self-enquiry and singing divine songs. There are various causes for depression - cloudy day, associating with evil persons, indigestion, influence of astral spirits and revival of old impressions of depression. When you get into a talking mood - practise mouna (silence) at once. When you are in a mood of hatred, develop the opposite virtue, love, and the mood will pass quickly. When you feel selfishness arise, do selfless work. When you are in the mood of separateness, mix with others - through service, love, kindness and forgiveness. If you feel lazy, do some active work.

Aliberated being is free from all moods - he has become their master. In atman (self) there are nomoods, there is only pure consciousness. Identify with Atman and you will easily destroy all moods. However, there is one good mood - the meditative mood. When this manifests, immediately give up reading, writing, talking etc., and begin to meditate. Watch for this kind of mood - when meditation comes by itself, without effort.

Laugh and smile. How can a mind that is dull and gloomy think of God? Try to be happy always. Happiness is your very nature. The spirit of cheerfulness must be cultivated by all aspirants.

With the growth of the mind, the pains will increase. But with its extinction there will be great bliss. Having mastery over the mind, free yourself from the world of perceptions in order that you may be of the nature of jnana or wisdom. Though surrounded by pleasurable or painful objects which disturb the equilibrium of your mind, remain rock-like, and receive all things with equanimity.

16 NOVEMBER - GOD IS FOUND IN SILENCE

Still the mind. Listen. Enter the silence. In silence one becomes aware of his soul-consciousness. Silence is a prerequisite for the apprehension of the reality. Enter the silence, realise the reality.

Silence the tongue; silence the desires; silence the thoughts. You will now enjoy the bliss of the eternal. Love silence. Live in silence. Grow in silence. Spend your life in silence. The truths of the Upanishads are revealed through the grace of God. In silence there is God-realisation. Silence is the peace that passes understanding - samadhi (the superconscious state).

Train yourself to enter a state of ceaseless meditation. Strive diligently, patiently and with genuine humility to attain wisdom. Earnest aspiration and sincerity of purpose are the most precious assets to the seeker after truth. Silence conserves energy and gives peace and strength. You can amass inexhaustible spiritual wealth in silence.

The aspirant should possess tranquility, self-control and compassion. An aspirant should avoid dainty dishes as they induce him to be voluptuous. An aspirant should not indulge in hearing worldly talk as it leaves worldly impressions on the mind and these stand in the way of fixing the mind on God. If you are freed from attachment, you have attained salvation indeed. He who has strong vairagya (dispassion), utter distaste for all pleasures of earth and heaven is first to pursue the path of jnana (wisdom).

He who has not developed strong dispassion, but is attached to the pleasures of this world must tread the path of karma yoga. He who is neither intensely attached to the world nor completely detached from it must take up the path of devotion (bhakti). The delusion of birth and death will only haunt those persons who have passions and darkness. Persons of powerful, pure tendency will be ever free from the fear of birth. Real austerity consists of the control of the senses and the mind, not mortification of the body. The middle path between extreme asceticism and self-indulgence is beneficial. Fasting is external austerity; repentance and meditation are internal austerity.

17 NOVEMBER - YOUR REAL NATURE

Do you know who you are? I shall tell you. Hear me. You are the master of the body and the senses and the mind. You are the master of your life. All power is within you. You have to know this and manifest it.

How can the mind torment you? How can despair overcome you? Despair is a quality of the mind and the mind is your servant. You are all bliss, all light, all strength, all knowledge. You are divinity. You are above and beyond both body and mind. You are immortal satchidananda (existence - knowledge - bliss absolute).

The important thing to know clearly is that you are not the slave of the mind and the senses. You have got into the habit of thinking that their craving is your craving. Now get out of this habit, by constantly reminding yourself that you have nothing to do with the mischievous mind and senses.

Remember constantly that you are not this perishable body. You are not this perishable, changing mind. You are the all-pervading consciousness. You are the eternal seer. You are the eternal witness. Therefore be ever free and blissful.

Intensify your spiritual life. Seek the light of vedanta. Be a flame of the light of the Upanishads. Ever meditate on: "I am the immortal, all-pervading Brahman." Om is the bow, the soul is the arrow and Brahman is the target.

When you realise the effulgent supreme being you shake off all evil and attain the supreme stainless unity. Devote yourself to the holy quest of truth. Devote yourself to the discovery of the ultimate spiritual essence that is all-pervading and interpenetrating.

Withdraw the senses. Look within and search your heart. Dive deep into the recesses of your heart, through deep meditation on the innermost self, the inner ruler. You will doubtless realise your identity with Brahman and get to the heart of the infinite - the heart of infinite joy and bliss.

18 NOVEMBER - DAMA - SENSE CONTROL

Dama is self-restraint. It is control of the senses. It is a vedantic sadhana (practice). It comes after the practice of sama (restraint of mind). It is one of the sad sampat (six-fold wealth). It does not allow the senses to run outwards. It gives strength, peace and concentration. It develops will power. It helps you to disconnect or shut off the mind from the senses, and the senses from the objects. It corresponds to pratyahara (sense-withdrawal) of raja yoga. An objector says, "Why should there be practice of dama when the mind is controlled by sama?" It is a double attack on the mind. The mind operates in conjunction with the senses; the mind will be subdued easily and effectively if you practise dama also. It weakens or thins out the mind.

There is also a deliberate order here. Without viveka (wisdom), vairagya (dispassion) is not powerful. It is viveka that weans the mind from sensual objects and directs it towards the absolute. So viveka comes first. If there is dawn of viveka, vairagya, serenity (sama) will come by itself. It is easy to control the mind if the senses are also controlled. So dama comes after sama. If you practise dama, uparati (satiety) follows; you are disgusted with sensual objects. Serenity and restraint of the indriyas are increased if you have titiksha or power of endurance. When you possess the above qualifications naturally you will have faith (sraddha) and a balanced inner life (samadana). If you are endowed with viveka, vairagya and six wealths, a burning yearning for liberation (mumukshutva) will automatically follow.

Sensual pleasure is the womb of pain. The cause for pain is the pursuit of pleasure. Sensual pleasure is imaginary, illusory, fleeting and tantalising. Abandon pleasure and rejoice in the eternal bliss of the atman. He who has destroyed desire is really a harmonised, peaceful and happy man.

19 NOVEMBER - YOUR REAL ENEMY

The senses are your real foes. They draw you out and disturb your peace of mind. Do not keep company with them. Subdue them. Restrain them. Curb them just as you would curb your enemies on the battlefield. This is not the work of a day. It wants patient and protracted sadhana (practice) for a very long time. Control of the senses is really control of the mind. All the ten senses must be controlled. Starve them to death. Do not give them what they want. Then they will obey your orders implicitly. All worldly minded persons are slaves of their senses, though they are educated, though they possess immense wealth, though they hold judicial and executive powers. If you are a slave of meat-eating, for instance, you will begin to exercise control of your tongue the moment you give up the meat-eating habit entirely for six months. You will consciously feel that you have gained a little supremacy over this troublesome sense of taste which began to revolt against you sometime ago.

Worldly pleasures intensify the desire for enjoying greater pleasures. Hence the minds of worldlings are very restless. There is no satisfaction and mental peace is absent. The mind can never be satisfied, whatever amount of pleasure you may store up for it. The more it enjoys the pleasures, the more it wants them. So people are exceedingly troubled and vexed by their own minds. They are tired of their minds. Hence, in order to remove these botherations and troubles the rishis (sages) thought it best to deprive the mind of all sensual pleasures. When the mind has been concentrated or made extinct, it cannot force one to seek for further pleasure, and all botherations and troubles are removed for ever and the person attains real peace.

The mind can do nothing without the help of the senses. And the senses cannot do anything without the help of the mind. Desire moves the mind and the senses and makes it outgoing. Abandon desires and control the mind. Thinking means externalisation or objectification. Thinking is samsara. Thinking causes identification with the body, with 'I-ness', 'mine-ness', time and space.

Stop this thinking through vairagya (dispassion) and abhyasa (practice). Merge yourself in pure consciousness where there is no thinking. This is the absolution; this is jivanmukti (liberation).

20 NOVEMBER - DISCIPLINE OF THE SENSES

Control the indriyas (senses), through introspection. Destroy the thirst for objects and sense-enjoyments then you will be established in supreme peace. Speak the truth and talk little. Observe silence for two hours daily. Speak only sweet, loving, soft words. Do not go to cinemas; do not look at ladies with a lustful look. When you move in the street look at the tip of the nose; do not look hither and thither. This is discipline of the eye, the organ of sight.

Do not attend dancing parties and do not listen to vulgar music. Give up musical entertainments and listening to worldly conversation. This is the discipline of the ear, the organ of hearing. Do not use scents. This is the discipline of the nose, the organ of smell. Give up salt and sugar for a week. Live on simple food. Fast on ekadasi (eleventh day of the lunar fortnight) or live on milk. This is the discipline of the tongue, the organ of taste.

Observe brahmacharya. Sleep on a hard mat. Walk barefooted. Do not use umbrellas. This is the discipline of the skin, the organ of touch.

To check the wandering mind and to develop concentration, fix your mind on your ishta devata (ideal). Bring the mind back again when it wanders and fix it on the image.

You may think or falsely conjecture that the senses are under your control. You may be duped. All of a sudden you will become their victim. You must have supreme control of all the senses. The senses may become turbulent at any time. Reaction may set in. Beware!

Master the senses, the mind and the intellect, ruthlessly. Do this through enquiry, discrimination, dispassion, devotion and meditation. Anger is born of rajas (restlessness). When desire is not gratified then anger manifests itself. Anger is a form of desire only. Slay this anger through vichara (enquiry), discrimination, patience, love, meditation, and identification with the ever serene Atman.

21 NOVEMBER - STRIVING FOR PERENNIAL HAPPINESS

It is in the nature of man to strive for happiness but all the happiness which he can gain by his actions is only of limited duration. The enjoyments of the senses are transient and the senses themselves are worn out by too much enjoyment. Further, sin generally accompanies these enjoyments and makes men unhappy beyond comparison.

Even if the pleasures of the world are enjoyed as much as their nature permits, if they are as intense, as varied and as uninterrupted as possible - old age still approaches and with it, death. And the enjoyments of heaven are in reality not more enviable than these pleasures of the senses. They are of the same nature although more unmixed and durable, and they come to an end for they are gained by actions. Actions are finite and their effects must also be finite.

In one word, there is necessarily an end to all these enjoyments and what avails us to strive for pleasure which we know cannot sustain us beyond the moment of enjoyment? It is therefore the nature of the man to look out for an unchangeable, infinite happiness (ananta sukha) - which must come from a 'being' in which there is no change if such a being can be found. It is only from him that man attains an unalterable happiness. And if this be so, this 'being' must become the sole object of all his aspirations and actions.

This 'being' is not very far - he resides in your heart. He is the sakshi chaitanya (witness consciousness) who witnesses the activities of your buddhi (intellect). He is the nirguna Brahman of the Upanishads.

TRUE BEING. True being is that which knows no bounds, neither physical nor intellectual. It is unbounded, spiritual being. The nature of approach must befit the nature of the object approached. The pathway can be known only when the destination is known. The indivisible, absolute and conscious nature of the reality signifies that life on earth should be lived according to rigid laws - laws of dispassion towards external existence and active awareness of the self as an unlimited being. It also shows that all forms of physical and even intellectual indulgence are deviations from eternal truth. It shows that every desire for objectification of consciousness is suicidal in the real sense.

22 NOVEMBER - SOUL POWER

O man! Do not be discouraged when sorrows, difficulties and tribulations manifest in the daily battle of life. Thou art the master of thy destiny. Thou art divine. Live up to it, feel it, realise it. Draw up spiritual strength and courage from within. Learn the ways to tap the source. Dive deep within. Sink down. Plunge into the sacred waters of immortality. You will be refreshed, renovated and vivified.

Understand the lawsoftheuniverse.Movetactfullyinthisworld.Learn the secrets of nature. Learn the best waystocontrolthemind.Conquerthemind.Conquest of the mind is really conquest of natureandtheworld.

Do not murmurorgrumblewhentroublesandsorrowsdescenduponyou. Difficulties strengthen your will,augmentyourpowerofenduranceandturnyourmindtowards God. Face them with a smile. Inyourweaknessliesyourrealstrength.Conquerthedifficulties one by one. This is the beginningofanewspirituallife,alifeofexpansion,gloryanddivinesplendour. Expand, grow. Build upallpositivevirtues-fortitude,patienceandcourage.Startanew life.

Have a newangleofvision.Armyourselfwithdiscrimination,cheerfulness, discernment, alacrity and undauntedspirit.Abrilliantfutureisawaitingyou.Letthepastbe buried. You can work miracles. Donotgiveuphope.Youcanneutralisetheeffectofevilinfluences and the antagonistic dark forcesthatmaycomeagainstyou.Youcannullifydestiny-many have done this. Assert. Recognise.Realise.Thouarttheimmortalself-claimthybirthrightnow.

You have createdyourdestinythroughthoughtsandactions.Youcanundo them by right thinking and right action.Wrongthinkingistherootcauseofhumansufferings."I am the immortal self" - this is right thinking.Workintermsofunity-workunselfishly-workwith atman bhava (feeling that the self is all).Thisisrightaction.

There is no suchthingassin.Sinisonlyamistake;itisamentalcreation. The baby soul must commit some mistakesduringtheprocessofevolution.Mistakesareyour best teachers. Think, "I am pure atman",andtheideaofsinwillbeblownintheair.

23 NOVEMBER - DIFFICULTIES STRENGTHEN YOU

Difficulties come to test you and thereby to help you by strengthening your will, patience and power of endurance. Be bold. Be cheerful. Be calm, cool and collected at all times, even in the face of difficulties. There is no spiritual sadhana (practice) completely free from obstacles and difficulties. God sends consolation, encouragement at every step to the sincere aspirant. Defeat and failure have their purpose. Criticism too has its uses.

Be free from depression and irritation. Remain unmoved by criticism or praise. Be steadfast. Stand firm like a rock - unshakable by emotional storms, frustrations and defeats. A spiritual aspirant is backed up by the whole spiritual world. All saints lend their invisible help and support to such a struggler. You are never really left alone. You will get help from saints and yogis internally. Their spiritual vibrations will elevate and inspire you.

Without great patience and perseverance, the spiritual quest becomes an uphill task. No half-measures will do on the spiritual path. Give your whole heart to truth and to sadhana. Have faith. Be firm. Unfold. Attain. All defeats are transitory. All set-backs are needed experiences. Muster up your courage. March forward. Success and victory are yours. Have patience first, second and last! This should be the motto for those seeking the inner light.

Great things have small beginnings. All growth is gradual. To be perfectly unperturbed, by anything, in all circumstances, looking upon all things as passing phenomena, ever feeling a distinct, silent witness to all the experiences of life - these are the marks of a spiritual aspirant.

These qualities have to be carefully and consciously cultivated. They do not come in a day. But they do come gradually by faithful practice. An unseen power guides and guards you. Feel his power and presence. He who is endowed with dispassion, compassion, serenity, self-control, and who has given up the desire for this world and the next, and who has control over his mind and senses, is fit to tread the spiritual path.

24 NOVEMBER - MOST IMPORTANT SADHANA

Man is a mixture of three ingredients. These are the human element, the brutal instinct and the divine ray. He is endowed with a finite intellect, a perishable body, a little knowledge and a little power. This makes him distinctly human. Lust, anger and hatred belong to his brutal nature.

The reflection of cosmic intelligence is at the back of his intellect. So he is an image of God. When the brutal instincts die, when this ignorance is rent asunder, when he is able to bear insult and injury, then he becomes one with the divine.

Athirsting aspirant is one who practises self-denial. He always tries to feel that the body does not belong to him. If anyone beats or cuts him, either his hand or throat, he should remain quiet. He should not speak even one single harsh word - because the body is not his. He starts his sadhana (practice) saying: "I am not this body. I am not this mind. Chidananda Rupa Sivoham."

One harsh word throws a man off balance and a little disrespect upsets him. How weak he has become, despite his boasted intellect, his high position in society, his degrees, his diplomas and titles.

Bear insult, Bear injury. This is the essence of all sadhana. This is the most important sadhana. If you succeed in this, you can very easily enter the illimitable domain of eternal bliss. Nirvikalpa samadhi (superconscious state) will come by itself. This is the most difficult sadhana. But it is easy for those who have burning vairagya (dispassion) and true yearning for liberation.

First you must become like a block of stone. Only then you will be established in this sadhana. Now nothing can affect you. Abuse, ridicule, mockery, insult, persecution - none of these can have any influence on you.

Life is God in expression.
Life is joy.
Life is the flooding bliss of the spirit.
Life is the fight for fullness and perfection.
Life is a battle for attaining supreme independence.

25 November- Helpers On the Spiritual Path

The spiritual path may in the beginning appear to be very hard, thorny, precipitous and slippery. Renunciation of objects gives pain at the outset. If you struggle hard to tread the path, if you once

make a strong determination and firm resolve, then it becomes very easy. You get interest and a new joy. Your heart expands and you have a broad outlook on life; you have a new wide vision. You feel the help from the invisible hands of the indweller of your heart. Your doubts are cleared by themselves, by getting the answer from within – you hear the still, sweet voice of God. There is indescribable thrill of divine ecstasy from within. There is ineffable, unabating, undiminishing, undecaying spiritual bliss. This gives new strength and footing on the path becomes firmer and firmer. The jivanmuktas (liberated sages), yogis, nityasiddhas(eternally perfect ones), amara-purushas(immortal souls)and chiranjivas(deathless souls) lend their helping hands to the struggling aspirants. The aspirants feel this actually – the feeling of loneliness and of being neglected and forsaken vanishes entirely.

Doubt or uncertainty is a great obstacle in the path of self-realisation. It must be removed by study of religious books, satsanga(holy company), vichara(enquiry) and reasoning. Again and again it will raise its head to mislead the aspirant. It should be killed beyond resurrection by certainty of conviction and firm unshakable faith based on reasoning.

An aspirant should always watch whether the sight of an unpleasant object or any unpleasant sound causes irritation or agitation in his mind. He should try to eradicate this irritation- he should have perfect control of temper. A weak aspirant, though strong in concentration, is over-come by idleness and a strong aspirant, if weak in concentration, is overcome by tossing of the mind. Concentration and energy should therefore be well balanced.

Stick to your ideas, convictionsand principles – whether you become popular or unpopular, even ifthe whole world opposesyou,Dig a deep pit in one place. Centralise all your efforts. Even so, try to imbibe the spiritual teachings of one spiritual preceptor. Drink deeply from one man- sit at his feet for some years. Fortheпreliminary practices of japa (repition of God's name), ahimsa (non-violence), and truth andtodevelop mercy, devotion, love, tolerance etc., you do not need a guru. You have to do all thesethings yourself. When you are ready, the guru will appear before you of his own accord.

26 NOVEMBER - GLORY OF THE SELF

Believeintheself.Drawpowerfromwithin.Divedeepintothesourceandcomeback quite refreshedandinvigorated.Haveunshakablefaiththatnothingcaneveroverpowerthese. Chant Om OmOmwhengloomtriestooverpowerthese.Rejoiceinthyownself.Havecontentment in thy ownself.Neverseekhappinessfromoutside.

A timidmanisunfitfortheattainmentofself-realisation.Havenoattachmentforthismortal body of fleshandbone.Castifofflikeslough,justasthesnakethrowsawayitsskin.Beprepared to give upthebodyatanymoment.Makeastrongresolve:Iwilldieorrealisetheself.

Do notloseheartwhenyouareinadversecircumstances.Becomearealheroandfight your enemieswithin-themind,indriyas(senses),vasanas(tendencies),samskaras(mental impressions)andtrishnas(cravings)whichhaverobbedyouofyouratmicjewel.Thespiritual battlefielddemandsgreatvalour,patience,perseverance,strength,courageand skill. Temptationswillmanifestwithoutamoment'snotice-youwillbebewildered.Theremay be no time to detectthem,soalwaysbeonthealert.

You camealone,nakedandweeping.Youwillgoalone,nakedandweeping.Thenwhyare you proud ofyourfalsewealthandfalseknowledge?Becomehumble,meek.Youwillconquer the world withhumility.Becomepureinthought,wordanddeed.Thisisthesecretofspiritual life.

Birth anddeath,bondageandfreedom,pleasureandpain,gainandloss–allarementalcreations. Transcendthepairsofopposites.Youwereneverborn;youwillneverdie.Thouarttheimmortal self always.Thouarteverfreeinthethreeperiodsoftime.Itisthephysicalbodythatcomes and goes. Theselfisall-full,all-pervading,infiniteandpart-less.

Recognisethatyouarethelivingtruth,thatyouareinseparablefromthatoneessence, the substratumofalltheseillusorynamesandforms,thesefalse,shadowyappearances.Get firmly established in Brahman. Now you are invulnerable.

Rely on yourownself,yourinnerspiritualstrength.Donotdependonmoney,friendsoranyone. Friends whenputtothetestwilldesertyou.LordBuddhanevereventrustedhisowndisciples. Become absolutelyfree.

27 NOVEMBER - PERFECTION AWAITS YOU

The circle of darkness and degeneracy has reached its climax. Come now, arise victorious and step up towards the zenith of perfection that awaits you. Live with a definite purpose - do not roam about aimlessly. Walk with a definite aim. Climb the hill of knowledge steadily and reach the summit of the temple of Brahman, the grand abode of the life immortal.

In the spiritual path there are constant failures and setbacks. Repeated endeavour, constant vigilance and undaunted perseverance are needed. When the heart's knots are gradually loosened, when the vasanas (tendencies) are gradually thinned out, when the bonds of karma are gradually loosened, when ignorance is dispelled, when weakness vanishes, you will become more and more peaceful, strong and serene. You will get more and more light from within. You will become more and more divine.

Hard enough is it to purify the lower nature, difficult enough is it to practise concentration and meditation, but vigilance, perseverance, constant practise, steady and persistent effort, company of sages, resolute will and strong determination, will obviate all difficulties and render the path easy, pleasant and attractive. Fight with the mind bravely. Go on fighting with an undaunted heart. At the end of your battle you will attain the illimitable dominion of eternal bliss, the sweet abode of immortality, the immaculate, imperishable self or Brahman.

Despair not; light is on the path. Serve all. Love truth. Be serene. Meditate regularly. You will soon attain the life beatitude, the silence, the supreme peace. Even when you get a glimpse of the truth, of the supreme, your whole life will be changed. You will be a changed being. You will have a new heart and a new wisdom. A new thrill of spiritual current will pass through your entire being. A wave of spiritual blisswill sweep over you. This state is indescribable.

28 NOVEMBER - THE WORLD NEEDS SANYASINS

Every religion has a band of anchorites who lead a life of seclusion and meditation. There are bhikkus in Buddhism, fakirs in Islam, sufistic fakirs in Sufism, fathers and brothers in Christianity. The glory of a religion will be absolutely lost if you remove the hermits or sanyisins or those who lead the life of renunciation and divine contemplation. It is these people who maintain and preserve the religions of the world. It is these people who give solace to the householders when they are in trouble and distress. They bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the depressed, strength to the weak and courage to the timid by imparting the knowledge of yoga and vedanta, and the significance of, "That thou art."

True renunciation is the renunciation of all passions, desires and egoism. If you have a stainless mind, a mind free from attachment, egoism and passion, you are a sanyasin - no matter whether you live in a forest or in the bustle of a city, whether you wear white cloth or an orange coloured robe, whether you shave your head or keep a long tuft of hair.

Shave the mind. Someone asked Guru Nanak, "O saint, why have you not shaved your head? You are a sanyasin." Guru Nanak replied: "My dear friend, I have shaved my mind." In fact, the mind should be cleanly shaved. Shaving the mind consists of getting rid of all attachments, egoism, infatuation, lust, greed and anger. That is real shaving. External shaving of the head has no meaning so long as there is internal craving.

Many have not understood what true renunciation is. Renunciation of physical objects is no renunciation at all. True renunciation lies in the abnegation of the mind. It consists of renouncing all desires and egoism, and notworld-existence. The real renunciation is the renunciation of the ego. If you can renounce this,you have renounced everything in the world. If the subtle egoism is given up, identification withthe body goes away automatically.

29 NOVEMBER - WHAT TO RENOUNCE

Mere outward giving up of things is nothing. It is not real renunciation. Real tyaga or sanyas (renunciation) consists in absolute renunciation of all vasanas (tendencies) and the destruction of the heart-knot of ignorance, the chit-jada-granthi (confusion between the conscious subject and inert object).

What is to be renounced is the bheda buddhi (divisive intellect) which says, "I am superior to that man". "I am the body." And the kartritva abhimana which thinks, "I am the doer". There is no use in your renouncing your home, wife and children. You must destroy moha (attachment) for the body, children, money, house, property - then you will get that state of immortality from which you will never return.

He, who has merely withdrawn himself from worldly possessions, cannot be regarded as having renounced the world altogether; but he who is living in actual contact with the world, finds out its faults. He who is freed from every passion and whose soul depends on nothing may be said to have truly renounced the world. Read the story of Raja Sikhidhwaja and Queen Chudala in the Yoga Vasishta.

The spirit cometh and goeth. Therefore you will have to be careful always in nourishing and protecting your spiritual samskaras (impressions) with burning vairagya (dispassion), intense and constant sadhana (practice) and burning mumukshutva (desire for liberation). Increase your good samskaras. Develop them. Multiply them.

People do not want to remove mala (impurity) by selfless service and vikshepa (restlessness of mind) with upasana (devotion). They think that bhakti and service are nothing. They at once jump to open the kundalini and raise the brahmakara vritti (the feeling of Brahmin is the all). They will only break down their legs.

Serve and worship; jnana andyoga will come by themselves, kundalini will be awakened by itself.

30 NOVEMBER - EXTERNAL RENUNCIATION IS NECESSARY

Renunciation of family life is the beginning of self-surrender. He who is endowed with burning vairagya (dispassion) and discrimination, one who is really earnest for his spiritual rejuvenation, can also do complete self-surrender even though he is living in the world.

In and through the world he realises the Lord, by complete surrender of his whole being to him. But it is only very few who are capable of doing this. This is because worldly life is beset with innumerable obstacles and temptations. And it is hard for the aspirant to attain complete dispassion in the midst of so many dissipations and distractions.

Therefore renunciation of family life makes the path easier for the aspirant. It also makes it smoother. The seed is now sown. The aspirant then goes to his preceptor and falls at his feet. Now the seed germinates.

The aspirant now starts the service of the guru. As he advances in his devotion and sincere service, his surrender becomes more and more perfect and complete. His heart becomes purer and purer and gradually the light of knowledge dawns in him. Now he cognises the supreme atman which pervades all, everywhere.

The actions performed by the sadhaka (seeker) after renunciation, do not bind him because he has offered all his actions unto his preceptor or God. He does not do any action which can be considered selfish.

Thus, through service of one's preceptor, with utter self-dedication, his heart becomes purified and, ultimately, the Lord becomes his preceptor. Now he is completely surrendered to the Lord and he attains the highest intuition.

1 DECEMBER - PERFECT RENUNCIATION

Vedanta does not want you to renounce the world. It wants you to change your mental attitude and give up this false, illusory 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness'. The snake charmer removes only the two poisonous fangs of the cobra. The snake remains the same. It hisses, raises its hood and shows its fangs. In fact, it does everything as before. The snake charmer has changed his mental attitude towards the snake. He has a feeling now that it has no poisonous fangs. Even so, you must remove the two poisonous fangs of the mind, namely, 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness' only. Then you can allow the mind to go wherever it likes. Then you will always have the feeling of the presence of God.

You must also renounce the attachment to renunciation, which is very deep rooted. You must renounce the idea: "I have renounced everything; I am a great renunciate". This attachment of aspirants is a greater evil than that of the householders: "I am a landlord; I am a brahmana, etc".

Not by shaving the head, not by dress, not by egoistic action is liberation to be attained. He who possesses wisdom is a real sanyasin (monk). Wisdom is the sign of a sanyasin. The wooden staff does not make a sanyasin. He is the real sanyasin of wisdom who is conscious of his absolute nature even in his dreams just as he is during the waking period. He is the greatest knower of Brahman. He is the greatest of sanyasins.

Perfect renunciation is born of discrimination. Dispassion should not be mild and half-hearted. It should be a burning flame of disgust for everything that is seen and that is not seen. Nothing but the state of final liberation is to be the ideal for attainment. There should be no desire for wife, husband, children and worldly activity. The aspirant must be encircled by the fence of dispassion on all sides.

Action is for the man of the world; the wisdom is for the sanyasin who has risen above worldliness. Only the man of renunciationwith knowledge attains Brahman, and none else. Without perfect renunciation, it is impossibleto pursue the path of the knowledge of Brahman.

2 DECEMBER - FAITH IS THE GREATEST THING

Faith is sraddha. Faith is the greatest thing in the world. Even the greatest philosopher has faith as his stronghold. No intellectualism can prove good if it is unsupported by faith. The whole world stands on faith, is guided by faith.

Religion has faith as its root. One cannot prove God if he has no faith in God. And this faith is the outcome of samskaras (past mental impressions). Faith is guided by impressions of actions done in previous births.

Blind faith should be turned into rational faith through understanding. Bhakti (devotion) is the development of faith. Jnana (self-knowledge) is the development of bhakti. Faith leads to the final experience. Whatever a person strongly believes in, that he experiences and that he becomes.

This whole world is a product of faithful imagination. If you have no faith in the world, the world does not exist. If you have no faith in sensual pleasure, you will not get pleasure from sensual objects. If you have no faith in God, you will never reach perfection. Wrong faith can even turn existence into non-existence. Faith is the fundamental necessity for spiritual sadhana (practice).

Aspiration is a development of faith. The flame of faith burns as the conflagration of spiritual aspiration for moksha (liberation). The devotee longs to have union with the beloved - he has no sleep, no rest. He always contemplates how to attain the object of his love. He prays, he sings, he gets mad with his Lord. Divine madness overtakes the devotee and he completely loses his personality in the aspiration for attaining God. This is called self-surrender.

You must have an ideal to live for - otherwise you will be heedless, depressed and negative. Understand well before you take a step. Have a clear cut ideal and then have right attempt. Faith in God, faith in oneself, faith in the guru (preceptor), faith in the wise teachings, faith in all that is good and noble - this is the sap of life.

3 DECEMBER - FAITH VERSUS REASON

Faith is first and reason is second. Faith is life and doubt is death. Reason is powerless to know God. Faith alone takes one to God. He who has faith has everything. He who has no faith has nothing. Have intense, unswerving faith - in the measure in which you have faith, you will achieve.

Faith brings God closer and reason puts Him far away. Faith is not blind belief - it grows out of the wisdom of the heart. Do total surrender to the Lord - keep nothing back, not even a little pride. Surrender yourself and your all to the Lord.

Say to the Lord: "O Lord! Give me only that which is best for me, because only you know what that is." A life of faith and devotion and of absolute faith in the name of the Lord will always be successful in the long run. Through love, faith and devotion alone is God-realisation possible.

Prayer releases God's power. It should consist of confession, praise and petition. Prayer is a spiritual tonic - it purges the mind of all its impurities - such as desire, attachment, anger, lust, etc. It also strengthens a man's aspiration and brings him closer to God. It brings him into the presence of God.

Pray to the Lord for strength and help as soon as you get out of bed in the morning. Satsanga (the company of holy men), faith, single-minded devotion to one's ideal, intense love for God, bhava (feeling), and prema (divine love) bring the devotee face to face with God.

Trust in the Lord with allthyheart. Acknowledge him in all thy ways. He will direct thy spiritual path. God helps the sincereaspirant at every step. God will help you too. He will bless you, inspire you and throw light uponthepath. Never mind about the external environments. Create your own internal environments,wherever you are.

4 DECEMBER - BALANCE OF MIND

Samadhana is mental balance. There is perfect concentration now. This is the fruit of the practices of sama (control of mind), dama (control of the senses), uparati (turning away), titiksha (endurance) and shraddha (faith). It is fixing the mind on atman (self) without allowing it to run towards objects and have its own way. It is self settledness. Sri Sankaracharya defines in "Atma-Anatma Viveka": "Whenever a mind engaged in sravana (hearing) and the rest wanders to any worldly object or desire, and finding it worthless, returns to the performance of the three exercises – such returning is called samadhana."

The mind is free from anxiety amid pains. There is indifference amid pleasures. There is stability of mind or mental poise. The aspirant or practitioner lives without attachment. He neither likes nor dislikes. He has a great deal of strength of mind and internal peace. He has unruffled supreme peace of mind.

Some aspirants have peace of mind when they live in seclusion, when there are no distracting elements or factors. They complain of great tossing of mind (viksepa) when they come to a city, when they mix with people. They are completely upset. They cannot do any meditation in a crowded place, This is a weakness. This is not achievement in samadhana. There is no balance of mind or equanimity in these persons. Only when a student can keep his balance of mind even in a battlefield when there is a shower of bullets all round, as he does in a solitary cave in the Himalayas, can he be really said to be fully established in samadhana.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "Perform all actions, O Dhananjaya, dwelling in union with the divine, renouncing attachments, and balanced evenly in success and failure." This is samadhana. Again you will find in the Gita: "The disciplined self, moving among the sense objects with senses freed from attraction and repulsion, mastered by the self, goeth to peace." This is also samadhana.

5 DECEMBER - SUCH IS THE MIND

There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point. You are born to concentrate the mind on God after collecting the mental rays that are dissipated on various objects. That is your important duty. You forget the duty on account of moha (attachment) to the family, children, name and fame, money, power and position.

Mindis compared to quicksilver, because its rays are scattered over various objects. It is compared toamonkey, because it jumps from one object to another. It is compared to moving air, because itisrestless. It is compared to a furious elephant, because of its passionate impetuosity.

Mindis known by the name 'great bird', because it jumps from one object to another just as a birdjumps from one twig to another, from one tree to another. Raja yoga teaches us how to concentrate the mind and then how to ransack the innermost recess of our mind.

Concentration is opposed to sensuous desires, as is bliss to flurry and worry, sustained thinking to perplexity, applied thinking to sloth and torpor, rapture to ill-will.

So long as the thoughts of one are not thoroughly destroyed through persistent practice, he should ever be concentrating his mind on one truth at a time. Through such unremitting practice, one-pointedness of the mind will accrue and instantly all the hosts of thoughts will vanish.

To remove this tossing of the mind and various obstacles which stand in the way of one-pointedness of the mind, the practice of concentration on one thing alone should be made.
The more the mind is fixed on God, the more strength you will acquire. More concentration means more energy. Concentration opens the inner chambers of love or the realm of eternity. Concentration is a source of spiritual strength.

Fix the mind on the atman. Fix the mind on the all-pervading pure intelligence and self-luminous effulgence. Stand firm in Brahman. Then you will become 'Brahma Samastha' (established in Brahman).

6 DECEMBER - FREEDOM: YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

Freedom is man's birthright. Freedom is knowledge, peace and bliss. Consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, all are attempting to attain this freedom. One nation is fighting another on the battlefield for freedom. A robber robs in order to obtain freedom from want - though his movement may be crooked and circuitous. Every movement of your foot is towards freedom or existence-knowledge bliss.

The real reason is that there is in you the immortal, self-effulgent soul or atman which is one without a second, which has no rival, which is the inner ruler, which is the support for the whole universe. In reality, you are this atman. That is the reason why you have such a feeling and desire.

In every heart, there is this desire for freedom, this all-consuming passion for liberty. Freedom is the birthright of man. Freedom is the very nature of Brahman or the eternal soul. Brahman is eternally free. The desire for freedom is there even in the lowliest of God's creatures. Freedom is an attribute of the soul, born with you. No force, no known human device, can suppress that desire. Freedom's flame is ever burning bright. Freedom or liberation is the ultimate goal of man. Freedom is liberation from the thraldom of mind and matter.

Real freedom is not merely political or economic, though political and economic freedom is essential for the welfare of a people. Real freedom is lordship over oneself. It is the freedom of the self. It is immortality; it is perfection. It is attainable only by slow and painful stages.

From time pass into eternity. This is freedom or emancipation. Still the mind. Herein lies freedom and bliss eternal. Real freedom is freedom from birth and death, freedom from the bondage of the flesh and mind, freedom from the bonds of karma and freedom from attachment to the body. Real freedom is freedom from egoism and desires, freedom from thoughts, likes and dislikes, freedom from lust, anger, greed and pride. Real freedom is identification with the supreme self. Real freedom is to realise the self. Real freedom is merging in the absolute.

Freedom is in detachment, desirelessness, mindlessness. Eradication and extinction of desires lead to the sublime state of supreme bliss and perfect freedom.

7 DECEMBER - MUMUKSHUTVA

Mumukshutva is intense desire for liberation or deliverance from the wheel of birth and death with its concomitant evils of old age, disease, delusion and sorrow. If one is equipped with the previous three qualifications, viz., viveka (wisdom), vairagya (dispassion) and sad sampat (six virtues), mumukshutva will come by itself.

The mind moves towards the source of its own accord, because it has lost its hold now on external objects. It has no resting place in this objective universe. Purification of the mind and mental discipline form the rock-bottom foundation of yoga. When this is effected, the longing for liberation dawns by itself. Mumukshutva must be of a burning type. If burning mumukshutva is coupled with burning vairagya, self-realisation will come within the twinkling of an eye. Generally the vast majority of people have got a dull type of vairagya and mumukshutva. So they do not succeed in their attempts. If one finds that he has not got burning mumukshutva, he must practise the other three sadhanas (practices) vigorously till he acquires intense longing for attaining salvation or immortality. That aspirant who is endowed with these four qualifications should hear the srutis (scriptures) from a Brahma Nishta guru (preceptor who is established in Brahman), and then reflect and meditate on the inner self. He will soon get self-realisation.

The aspirant should practise all the four means to a maximum degree. Proficiency in one sadhana alone will not make you perfect. There is a definite significance in the sequence of the four sadhanas. That aspirant who is in possession of the four means is a blessed divinity on the surface of this earth. He is Brahman himself. He must be adored and worshipped. My silent salutations unto such exalted souls!

Open yourself fully to the divine influence. Develop a burning desire for the attainment of God-realisation and burning dispassion (vairagya) for worldly enjoyments. Abandon all worries. Abandon all worldly ambitionsand mundane desires. Soar high in the realm of higher spiritual knowledge. Show your moralcourage and spiritual strength now, O Ram!

8 DECEMBER - IMPORTANCE OF GURU BHAKTI

It is universally admitted that an efficient teacher is needed in all branches of knowledge, in this physical plane and that physical, mental, moral and spiritual culture and growth can only be had through the help and guidance of a competent teacher or master. This is a universal, inexorable law of nature. Why then do you deny the application of this universally accepted law in the realm of spirituality as well?

Spiritual knowledge is a matter of guruparanpara - it is handed down from guru to disciple. Study the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. You will have a comprehensive understanding of this truth.

Some aspirants do meditation for some years independently. Later on they feel the actual necessity for a guru. They come across some obstacles in the way and do not know how to proceed further. Then they begin to search for a guru.

The student and the teacher should live together, as father and devoted son, with extreme sincerity and devotion. The aspirant should have an eager receptive mind, ready to imbibe the teachings of the master. Then only will the aspirant be spiritually benefitted. Otherwise there is not the least hope of the spiritual uplift of the aspirant and the complete regeneration of his old unregenerate nature.

Once Sankaracharya wanted to test the devotion of his disciple Padmapada. The river Kaveri was in flood. Sankara was standing on the bank of the river and Padmapada was standing on the other bank. Sankara beckoned Padmapada to come to him immediately. There was no boat. Padmapada did not care, he at once jumped into the river. He did not know how to swim. This is real devotion. Through the grace of Sankaracharya, Padmapada walked quite easily on the water. At each step alotus flower appeared. This is how he got the name Padmapada (lotus in the feet).

There is no hope of salvation for the deluded soul without the healing, magnetic touch and guidance of the spiritual preceptor. It is the guru only who can effect a radical change in the angle of vision of men and raise them to sublime, transcendental heights of eternal life in atman (self) with cosmic consciousness, divine glory, atmic effulgence and splendour.

9 DECEMBER - GLORY OF THE GURU

The guru is God himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant. Grace of God takes the form of the guru. To see the guru is to see God. The guru is united with God. He inspires devotion in others and his presence purifies all.

The guru is verily a link between the individual and the immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from this to That, and thus has free and unhampered access into both realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality; and, bending down he raises the struggling individuals with one hand, while with the other he lifts them up into the imperium of everlasting joy and infinite truth-consciousness.

The true guru is Brahman himself. He is an ocean of bliss, knowledge and mercy. He is the captain of your soul, the fountain of joy. He removes all your troubles, sorrows and obstacles. He shows you the right divine path and tears your veil of ignorance. He makes you immortal and divine, transmuting your lower, diabolical nature. He gives you the rope of knowledge, and takes you up when you are drowning in this ocean of births and deaths. Do not consider him to be only a man, for, if you do, you are a beast. Worship your guru and bow to him with reverence. Guru is God. A word from him is a word from God. He need not teach anything. Even his presence or company is elevating, inspiring and stirring, his very company being self-illumination. Living in his company is spiritual education. Read the Granth-Saheb (the holy scripture of the Sikh religion). You will come to know the greatness of the guru.

Man can learn only from man, and hence God teaches through a human body. In your guru, you have your human ideal of perfection, the pattern into which you wish to mould yourself. Your mind will readily be convinced that such a great soul is fit to be worshipped and revered.

Guru is the door to liberation, the gateway to the transcendental truth consciousness. But, it is the aspirant that has to enter through it. The guru is a help, but the actual task of practical spiritual practice falls on the aspirant himself.

The guru's tender smile radiates light, bliss, joy, knowledge, peace. He is a blessing to suffering humanity. Whatever he says is Upanishadic teaching. The guru knows the spiritual path. He knows the pitfalls and snares on the way. He gives timely warning to his students. He showers his grace on their heads. All agonies, miseries, tribulations, taints of worldliness, etc., vanish in his presence.

10 DECEMBER - KNOW THE GURU

Guru leads man to God. Guru, mantra (mystic formula) and devata (deity) form a unity. Guru is present in the mantra which he enlivens and communicates. The mantra is the body of the devata. The guru is the embodiment of the deity that is invoked.

True guru is living God. Devotion to guru trains your heart and prepares for devotion to the Lord. Gurus are plenty but good disciples are very rare. When the disciple is ready the guru appears. He who has a guru can alone know Brahman and the knowledge received from a teacher, alone becomes perfect.

Initiation is necessary to go along the spiritual path. Guru shows you the path. When you are initiated your body and mind become purified. The highest spiritual wisdom experienced by the seers of truth in ancient times, has been passed down to the present day, through an unbroken line of traditional teachers.

Have self-control, tranquillity, sincerity and humility. Then approach the spiritual preceptor. Then alone you will be benefitted. Hear silently - anything that your guru may say - hear with faith and bhava. Adapt yourself to his ways. He who serves the preceptor and follows his instructions gains the greatest benefit. He who speaks ill of his guru and does not follow his instructions loses most.

Aperfect guru is learned in the scriptures and is desireless. He is a boundless ocean of mercy. He isa full knower of Brahman. He is a friend and a guide to those who have surrendered to him. Guru is the word. The word is guru. Though God is indescribable you can see and realise God through the guru.

Here are the characteristics of a real guru. If you find them in any man accept him at once as your guru. A real guru is one who has full knowledge of the self and the vedas. He dispels the doubts of aspirants. He has equal vision and balanced mind. He is free from likes and dislikes, joy and sorrow, egoism, anger, lust, greed, pride, etc. He is an ocean of mercy. In his presence one gets peace and elevation of mind - all doubts are cleared. The guru does not expect anything from anybody. He has an exemplary character. He is full of joy and bliss. He is in search of real aspirants.

11 DECEMBER - NECESSITY FOR A GURU

Ishvara (God)isguruofgurus.Heremovestheveilofignoranceandblessestheignorant jiva (soul). Theaspirantshouldregardhisimmediateguru–inthephysicalform-asanincarnation of that Guruofallgurus.Heshouldhaveequaldevotiontohim.Guruinphysicalformisthe main source andembodimentofallgoodandhappinessthataccruestothedisciple.

The discipleshouldrealisethesupremenecessityforobeyingtheguru'scommandsandbehests. He shouldkeephisfaithintheguruunsulliedandstaunch.Laybaretoyourguruthesecrets of your heart.Themoreyoudoso,thegreaterthesympathy.Andthismeansanaccession of strength toyouinthestruggleagainstsinandtemptation.Aspiritualteacheractuallytransmits his spiritualpowertohisdisciple.

A certainspiritualvibrationofthesatguruisactuallytransferredtothemindofthedisciple. Sri RamakrishnaParamahamsaactuallytransmittedhisspiritualpowertoSwamiVivekananda. Lord Jesus didthesametohisdisciples.Thisisthemaster'stouch.

It is hewhotransmutesthelittlejiva(soul)intogreatBrahman,infinite.Itishewhooverhauls the old,wrong,viciousnature(samskaras)ofaspirantsandawakensthemtotheattainment of knowledgeoftheself.Itishewhoupliftsthejivasfromthequagmireofbodyandsamsara (worldlylife),whoremovestheveilofavidya(ignorance),alldoubts,fears,etc.Itishe who awakens the kundalini and opens the eye of inner intuition.

Neverlookintothedefectsoftheguru.Deifytheguru.Guru,Ishvara,Brahman,Om,truth, are all one.Strictlyobeytheguruandcarryouthisorders.Youmustthinkthatunderneaththe name andtheformofthegurutherеistheall-pervading,pureconsciousness.Incourseoftime the physicalformwillvanishandyouwillrealiseyourownself,thepureBrahmicconsciousness that lies at the back of the physical form of your guru.

Onceyouhavetakenamanasyourguruyoushouldneverchangeevenifyougetaman with greatersiddhis(development).Thenonlyyouwillhavestrongfaith.Andthroughthisstrong faith you willrealiseGodintheguru.

12 DECEMBER - THE DISCIPLE'S DUTY

People want to have contact with an avatara (divine incarnation), without being endowed with the proper qualifications. Even if an avatara appears before you, you will not be able to recognise him. You have not got the eyes to see him. You will take him for an ordinary man.

Itis only a saint who can recognise a saint. Only a Jesus can understand a Jesus. Even if you live with a saint for a considerable time, you will not be able to fathom or know him.

Abeginner on the spiritual path should have various upa-gurus (assistant gurus). He must prepare himself gradually. He must get spiritual instructions from them. He must follow their instructions strictly. He should make himself fit to approach a Brahma nista guru (a guru who is already established in Brahman). He should practise meditation and he should see the Lord in meditation.

An aspirant should develop various satvic (divine) virtues. These are all enumerated in the Bhagavad Gita, chapters thirteen and sixteen. These are virtues such as humility, fearlessness, freedom from anger, a forgiving tendency, tranquillity, self-restraint and so on. He must also practise yama (self-restraint) and niyama (discipline). This is his work. The guru will not do this.

But nowadays people want to practise a comfortable yoga, lying in an easy chair. They do not want to practise any vigorous tapas (penance) or sadhana (spiritual discipline). They expect everything to come by the grace of the guru. They even seem to expect him to place self-realisation before them, like a ready-made betel-leaf - so they can just take it and swallow it easily!

All saints and yogis are ready to receive you with outstretched hands and love - if you have the real eyes to behold them, if you have the real heart to unite with them, if you have the real earnestness and longing to be in their company, if you have a real thirsting for God-realisation - and if you are really hungry to eat the sweet divine manna of the illimitable domain of bliss of the self.

13 DECEMBER - GURU BHAKTI

You willfindintheGita:"Learnthouthisbydiscipleship,byenquiryandbyservice.Thewise,the seers oftheessenceofthings,willinstructtheeinwisdom."(ChapterIV-Verse34.)

The gurumustnotonlybeaBrahma-shrotriya(well-versed),butaBrahma-nishtha(established in Brahman)aswell.Merestudyofbookscannotmakeoneaguru.Onewhohasstudiedthe vedasandwhohasdirectknowledgeoftheatman,throughanubhava(directexperience),isa guru.Ifyoufindpeaceinthepresenceofaholyman(mahatma)andifyourdoubtsareremoved inhispresence,youcantakehimasyourguru.Whenthegurugivesthemantratohisdisciples, he gives with it his own power.

Justaswaterflowsinariver,soalsojnana(knowledge)andbhakti(devotion)areeverflowing fromasage.Onlyathirstymandrinkswater.Sotoo,athirstyaspirant,whohasimplicitfaithin hisguruandiseagertoimbibehisteachings,candrinkthenectarfromhim.Thestudentcan imbibe from his guru only in proportion to the intensity of his faith in him.

The guruteststhestudentsinvariousways.Somestudentsmisunderstandhimandlosetheir faith in him.Hencetheyarenotbenefitted.Butthosethatstandthetests,boldly,comeout successful in the end.

The periodicalexaminationsinthe'UniversityofSages'areverystiffindeed.Onceagreatsage (Gorakhnath)askedsomestudentstoclimbatalltreeandthrowthemselvesheaddownwards onto a verysharptrident(trisula).Manyofthefaithlessstudentskeptquiet.Butonefaithful student atonceclimbedupthetreewithlightningspeedandhurledhimselfdown.Hewas protectedbytheinvisiblehandofthesageandhadimmediateself-realisation.Thismanhadno deha-adhyasa (feeling, "I am body"), but the others had strong attachment for their bodies.

Once GuruGovindSinghtestedhisstudents.Hesaid:"Mydeardisciples,ifyouhaverealdevotion towards me,letsixofyoucomeforwardandgivemeyourheads."Twofaithfuldisciplesoffered their heads.

Many peopledebateoverthenecessityforhavingaguru.Someassertvehementlythatitisnot necessary tohaveaguruforspiritualadvancementandthatonecanattainself-realisation through one'sowneffortsonly.Nospiritualprogressispossibleunlessamangetsthebenign grace and directguidanceofaspiritualpreceptor.

14 DECEMBER - RESPECT ALL: ADORE ONE

Competent disciples are never in want of a competent guru. Realised souls are not rare, but ordinary ignorant persons cannot easily recognise them. Only a few persons, who are pure and embodiments of all virtuous qualities, can understand realised souls, and they only will be benefitted in their company. The number of realised souls may be less in the present age, when compared with the satya yuga (the golden age), but they are always present to help the aspirants. They are always searching for the proper Adhikaris (qualified aspirants). Let each man take the path according to his capacity, understanding and temperament. His true guru will meet him along that path.

Do not dig shallow pits here and there for obtaining water, for the pits will dry up soon. Dig a very deep pit in one place and centralise all your efforts here. You will find good water that can supply you throughout the year. Even so, try to imbibe thoroughly the spiritual teachings from one preceptor alone. Drink deeply from one man. Sit at his feet for some years. It is useless to wander from one man to another, out of curiosity, losing faith in a short time. Do not have the ever-changing mind of a prostitute, but follow the spiritual instructions of one man only. If you go to several people and follow the instructions of many persons, you will become quite bewildered and be in a dilemma.

From one doctor you get a prescription. From two doctors you get consultation. From three doctors you get your own cremation. Even so, if you have many gurus, you will be bewildered and be at a loss to know what to do. One guru will tell you: "Do this." Another will tell you: "Do that." A third guru will tell you: "Do the other." You will be quite puzzled. Stick to one guru and follow his instructions. Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one master. Then you will have rapid spiritual progress.

The guru and the scriptures can show you the path and remove your doubts. Direct experience or direct intuitive knowledge is left for your own experience. A hungry man will have to eat for himself. No doubt, the guru's blessing can do everything. But how can one have his blessings? By pleasing the guru. A guru can be pleased with his disciple only if the latter carries out his spiritual instructions implicitly. Therefore, follow the instructions of the guru carefully. Only then will you deserve his blessings which can do everything. 377 Sivananda Daily Readings

15 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 1 Fear not, my child. In reality there is no death for thee. There is a means for crossing this ocean
of relative existence and attaining immortality or the supreme bliss. I shall teach thee now Brahma-vidya (knowledge of the absolute).

Salutations to satchidananda para (supreme) Brahman, that glorious first preceptor, who is self-luminous, eternal, indivisible, pure, spotless, desireless, attributeless, timeless, spaceless, changeless, beginningless and endless.

That ultimate reality which is the support for this world, body, prana (life), mind and senses, which is the womb for the vedas, which is all-pervading and all-permeating, which is colourless, odourless, tasteless, nameless and formless - that something shines eternally.

Some indescribable supreme principle which is imperishable, unborn, undecaying, fearless, motionless, one without a second, ancient and infinite - that alone exists.

What is neither short nor long, neither that much nor this much, neither black nor white, neither stout nor thin, neither good nor bad - that should be understood as Brahman.

That which is neither subtle nor dense, which has neither caste nor name, which is immutable, immortal and bodiless, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech - that should be understood as Brahman.

Brahman is distinct from the gross, subtle and causal bodies. He is the soul of all. He is the inner ruler of all. He is eternally free. He is without action, and without motion.

Brahman cannot be defined.To define Brahman is to deny Brahman. The only adequate description of Brahman is a series of negatives. That is the reason why the Upanishads declare, "Neti-neti", "not this, not this".

16 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 2

Maya (illusion) is the upadhi (limiting adjunct) of Ishvara (God). She is the illusory power of Brahman. She keeps the lila (creative play) of Ishvara (God), through her three gunas (qualities), viz., satva (purity), rajas (passion) and tamas (darkness).

Maya is not non-existent because it appears, neither is it existent because it is destroyed by the dawn of knowledge. Maya - is 'not That'. It is an indescribable appearance.

Maya is neither sat (real) nor asat (unreal). Maya is anadi santam (beginningless) but has an end only for the sage who has realised the self). Maya - is suddha satva or pure satva.

He who gets knowledge of the self having overcome maya or the illusory power, will alone know what maya is, how it arises and is destroyed.

The five elements, the five tanmatras (subtle or root elements), and the various objects of the world are all products or modifications of maya.

Just as you can infer the existence of fire through smoke, so also you can infer the existence of maya through its various manifestations.

Maya is of the nature of mind. Maya generates different degrees of illusion. Maya pervades everywhere. If your mind is destroyed by discrimination and vichara (enquiry into the self), then maya will not afflict you.

This mind which ever hankers after sensual objects is the seed of maya. If the mind is annihilated maya will vanish. You will attain the state of quiescence. Brahma jnana (knowledge of the absolute) will dawn in you.

17 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 3

Avidya (ignorance) is malina satva (weakened purity). It is the upadhi (limiting adjunct) of jiva (individual soul). It is the karana sharira (causal body) of the individual soul. Avidya is anandamaya kosha. Avidya is a false perception by which the ignorant jiva takes the body and intellect as pure, permanent and a source of pleasure.

Just as a king acts the part of a beggar, out of his own free will on the stage in a drama, so also the satchidananda Brahman acts the part of a jiva in the drama of the world out of his own free will for sport.

Just as men with a defective vision behold a white thing as yellow, so does one perceive the self as the body on account of avidya or ignorance.

When one gets knowledge of the self, this avidya vanishes. It is the destruction of avidya that is the Brahmic seat.

Just as the mirror is dimmed by dirt, so Brahman is veiled by avidya. Therefore human beings are deluded by this avidya. Mind, senses, egoism, intellect and body are the efforts of avidya. If the cause is destroyed, the effects are destroyed by themselves.

This universe of names and forms has its origin in ignorance. It is dissolved by knowledge of the self. The universe, being other than the self, is unreal and like a dream. It is like a mirage.

Just as a snake is superimposed on the rope, silver on the mother-of-pearl, a thief in the post, city in the clouds, mirage in the desert, blueness in the sky, so also this world is superimposed on Brahman.

Just as it is water alone that appears as waves, ripples, etc., gold alone as ear rings, bangles, etc., clay alone as pots, jars, etc., threads alone as cloth, towel, etc., so also does Brahman alone appear as many universes.

Children regard a wooden elephant as an elephant, but the grown-up persons treat it as wood. Even so the wise behold only Brahman everywhere but the ignorant perceive the non-self only. The whole universe is within Brahman. It appears as external to you, just as your body appears external to you in the mirror on account of maya (illusion).

Just as a man doesnot behold the object, which he has seen in his dream when awake, so also jivanmukta (liberated sage) doesnot perceive the universe after he attains knowledge of Brahman.

18 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 4

The mind has the power of creating or undoing the whole universe in the twinkling of an eye. Slay this mind through vichara (enquiry), destruction of vasanas (psychological impressions or conditioning) and control of its fluctuation.

Mind is a bundle of vasanas (subtle desires). Through vasanas bondage is caused. Destruction of vasanas will bring freedom. The mind will attain quiescence like a gheeless lamp if the vasanas are destroyed.

Just as a silk-wormiscaughtinitsown cocoon, so also man is caught in this vast net of samsara (worldly life)byhisownsankalpas(thoughts and notions) and vasanas.

The enemyoftheatman(self)isthe fluctuating mind only. The mind through its power of fluctuationgeneratescountlessvasanas and sankalpas. Destroy this fluctuating power of the mind throughconstantBrahma-vichara.

Brahmanwillnotshinewhenthedualities of the mind are not destroyed. Destroy the dualities. Brahmanwillshineinitspristineglory.

Ahamkara(egoism)whichisthesource of all troubles has its seat in the mind. Annihilation of egoism willbringaboutdestruction of the mind and annihilation of the mind will cause destruction of egoism.

The ideas of'mine'and'thine'areonly the creation of the mind. If the mind is destroyed through vichara, theseideaswillvanish.Destruction of the mind alone is moksha (liberation).

Destructionofsankalpasisreallydestruction of the mind. It is only sankalpas destroyed beyond resurrectionthatconstitutetheineffable, imperishable, and effulgent Brahmic seat.

Just as goldispurifiedbyheatingiton the fire, so also mind is purified by the fire of meditation.

19 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 5

As fire is concealed by ashes, sword by the scabbard, sun by the clouds, foetus by the amnion, rubies by the earth, mattress by the bedsheet, so also Brahman is concealed by flesh and bones. If you remove the ash you can perceive the fire; if the clouds are dispersed you can cognise the sun; if you remove the scabbard you can behold the sword; if you remove the bedsheet you can see the mattress. Even so, if the veil of ignorance which conceals the Brahman is removed by knowledge of Brahman you can directly cognise the self-luminous Brahman.

You cannot see the all-pervading butter in the milk, but if you churn it you can get the butter. Even so you cannot see Brahman by these physical eyes, but you can behold the all-pervading Brahman by the churning of meditation.

Purge your mind of all impurities. Sever mentally all your connection with visible objects. Destroy the weeds of desires. Abandon all sankalpas (thoughts). Eradicate the longings. Meditate on Brahman. You will attain soon the nondual Brahmic seat of ineffable splendour.

Understand the right significance of the 'Tat Tvam Asi' mahavakyas (the great declaration, 'That Thou Art'). The knowledge relating to the identity of the individual soul and the supreme soul that arises from mahavakyas like 'Tat Tvam Asi' (Thou art That) is the means to emancipation. The immaculate and supreme seat can be attained very easily if you possess equal vision, balanced mind and discrimination, if you associate with the wise persons and if you practise vichara or enquiry constantly.

One soon becomes that on which he constantly meditates with great intensity in accordance with the illustration of the wasp and the worm.

Negate the five sheaths. Control the senses. Sit quietly. Meditate always, "I am satchidananda svayamprakasa Brahman" (Brahman which is existence-consciousness bliss and which is self-luminous), which is the substratum for these five sheaths and the whole world. Keep up the Brahma-bhavana (contemplation of Brahman) while walking, eating and bathing.

You should ever be engaged in enquiry of Brahman, till you get Brahma-jnana (knowledge of the absolute). You should practise right conduct also. You should have association with the sages. Brahma-bhavana, the end of all vedas, will dawn of itself in you, if you generate the Brahmakara-vritti (the concept that Brahman alone is real) constantly from your satvic antahkarana (pure mind and heart) by meditating on the right significance of the mahavakyas, 'Aham Brahma Asmi' (I am Brahman).

20 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 6

Om is thesymbolofBrahman.Itisthewordofpower.Itisthesacredmonosyllable.Itisthe essence ofallthevedas.Itistheboattotakeyoutotheothershoreoffearlessnessand immortality. Meditate on Om with bhava (feeling) and meaning.

You shouldmakeBrahma-vicharahabitualinyoubyconstantpractice.Thenonlyyourmindwill be underyourperfectcontrol.Alltheimpuritiesofthemindwillbewashedawaybybrahma-vichara.Enquireunceasingly:"WhoamI?Whencecamethisuniverse?Howdidbirthanddeath come? What is bondage?" You will be able to attain the imperishable abode of eternal bliss.

If youwanttoattainBrahmanalllongingsforobjectsshouldperish.Themoreyouareremoved fromobjects,themoretheeffulgenceofBrahmanwillradiateinyou.Youwillneverbeabletogo intosamadhi(superconsciousstate)althoughyoucansitinthepadmaorsiddhaasanaforsix hours at a stretch, if you are not free from attraction and repulsion, anger, egoism and pride.

Mergethespeechinthemind;mergethemindintheintellect;mergetheintellectinthewitness of theintellectorBrahmanandenjoythesupremepeace.Restrainthesenses.Silencethe bubblingthoughts.DrownthemindinBrahman,whoiswithin.Nowyoucanrealiseyouridentity with Brahman.

Acquire the fourmeans.Controlyourspeech.Annihilateallhopes.Hearthesrutis(scriptures). Reflect on whatyouhaveheard.Thenmeditate.Youwillattainselfrealisation.Brahmancanbe clearly and definitelyrealisedonlythroughnirvikalpasamadhi.Samadhiensuesonlywhenthe purified mind ismergedinBrahman.

When Brahmanisrealisedbymeansofnirvikalpasamadhi,thentheheart'sknotviz.,avidya (ignorance), kama(desire)andkarma(action)isdestroyed.Youcannothavesamadhiwithout perfect dispassion;youcannothaveselfrealisationwithoutsamadhi;youcannothaveperfect freedom withoutself-realisation.

21 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 7

He who thinks, "I am the body .... This body is mine... She is my wife .... He is my son .... I am a brahmana .... I am fat .... I am black .... I am a pandit", is an ignorant man. He is bound. He who thinks, "I am not the body: I am all-pervading, changeless, immortal, indivisible, self-contained, self-existent, satchidananda Brahman," is a wise sage. He is free.

He who thinks, "I did this work, so I will go to heaven; I enjoyed such and such a thing", is an ignorant man. He who thinks, "Prakrti (nature) does everything ... I am only witness .... I am non-doer .... I am non-enjoyer", is a wise sage.

The annamaya sheath (food sheath) is made up of the five elements. It has a beginning and an end. It is inert and full of parts. It is an effect of the five elements. It is full of impurities. Therefore you are not this physical body or the annamaya sheath. You are the witness of this body. Understand, therefore, "I am not the body. I am Brahman."

The pranamaya kosha (the vital sheath) is the product of rajoguna (dynamism, passion). It also has a beginning and an end. It is inert. It is an effect. Therefore you are not the pranamaya kosha. You are the witness of this sheath. Understand, therefore, "I am not the pranamaya kosha. I am Brahman."

The manomaya kosha (the mental sheath) is a product of satva guna. It also has a beginning and an end. It is inert . It is an effect. Therefore you are not the manomaya kosha. You are the witness of this sheath. Understand, therefore, "I am not manomaya kosha. I am Brahman."

The vijnanamaya kosha (the buddhi sheath) is a product of satva guna. It has also a beginning and an end. It is inert. It is an effect. Therefore you are not the vijnanamaya kosha. You are witness of this sheath. Understand therefore, "I am not the vijnanamaya kosha. I am Brahman." The anandamaya kosha (the bliss sheath) is avidya or ignorance, a modification of prakrti (nature). It is the effect of past deeds. It is endowed with changing attributes. It is jada (insentient). Therefore you are not the anandamaya kosha. You are the witness of this sheath. Understand therefore, "I am not the anandamaya kosha. I am Brahman."

22 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 8

A jivanmukta (liberated sage) who has reached the imperishable turiya (transcendental) state can never be affected by the pairs of opposites. He always rests in his own satchidananda svarupa (essential entity as satchidananda). He roams about happily.

Ajivanmukta realises that he is beyond the three bodies and the five koshas; he is the witness of the three states; he is pure consciousness.

For a liberated sage who has realised that all beings are the self, there is neither delusion nor grief, as there is no second for him.

The sage who has destroyed all his desires and egoism, who is always calm and serene, equanimous, who does not see any distinction of form and who has freed himself from delusion or ignorance, shines brilliantly.

The jivanmukta rests with an unshaken mind in the all-blissful Brahman. He is free from all the modifications of the mind. His heart is pure like the Himalayan snow or the crystal. He is free from the distinctions - I, he, thou.

The liberated sage, the prince among ascetics who has conquered the enemy, ignorance, who has known the secret of true bliss, uses the palms of his hands as his bowl, and sleeps blissfully under the foot of a tree. The sage does not care for public criticism. He keeps a cool mind even when he is assaulted. He blesses those who persecute him. He beholds only his own self everywhere.

He whose mind does neither sink nor float amidst pains and pleasures is indeed a liberated sage. He has rendered his mind completely quiescent by identifying himself with Brahman.

The jivanmukta has a consciousness of body in the form of a samskara (psychological impression). The videhamukta has no consciousness of the body.

23 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 9

Thou art not this perishable body. Thou art not the wavering mind. Thou art not the indriyas (senses). Thou art not the intellect. Thou art not the causal body. Thou art the all-pervading, immortal Brahman. Realise this and be free.

Thou art the prajnana ghana atman (embodiment of wisdom). Thou art chidghana Brahman (mass of consciousness). Thou art vijnana ghana purusha (mass of knowledge). Thou art ananda ghana soul (mass of bliss). Realise this and be free.

Thou art akhandaikarasa Brahman (one homogeneous essence). Thou art chinmatra purusha (pure consciousness). Thou art spotless, passionless, sexless and bodiless soul. Realise this and be free.

Thou art timeless, spaceless, deathless, changeless, endless, beginningless, motionless, desireless, faultless and actionless Brahman. Realise this and be free.

Thou art indivisible, partless, and infinite. Thou art birthless and deathless. Thou art immutable and self-luminous. Thou art eternal, perpetual and self-contained. Realise this and be free.

Thou art anandamaya-purusha (blissful soul). Thou art chinmaya Brahman (pure consciousness). Thou art jyotirmaya atman (radiant). Realise this and be free.

Thou art distinct from the threebodies and the five koshas. Thou art the witness of the three states. Realise this and be free.

That supreme Brahman whichisthe immortal self of all, which is the beginningless entity, which is immutable and infinite, whichisbeyond the reach of mind and speech - that Brahman art thou. Meditate on this. Realise thisandbe free.

24 DECEMBER - MOKSHA GITA - 10

O my child! Hast thy delusion been destroyed? Have you become fearless now? Have your doubts been removed? Are you resting now in your own satchidananda svaropa? I have declared to thee the profound secret of vedanta, the essence of vedas.

O preceptor! I have realised the self now. I am verily that Brahman, which is self effulgent, one without a second, which is changeless, partless, formless, eternal, all pervading, the absolute and the homogeneous essence.

I am satchidananda Brahman. I am pure, infinite, unattached, timeless, motionless, deathless, decayless and fearless. I have no connection with the body and the mind. I am actionless, formless.

Salutations unto thee, O venerable guru! Thou hast saved me from the wheel of birth and death. Through thy grace I have attained immortality and eternal bliss. All my doubts, delusion and ignorance have vanished. Millions of prostrations unto thee, O merciful Lord.

SONG OF DIVINE LIFE
Gopala Gopala Muralilola
Yasoda Nandana Gopibala.
Serve - love - give - purify, practise ahimsa,
satyam, brahmacarya 'take satvic food', study Gita,
Have satsang, control senses, do japa kirtan,
Meditate in brahmamuhurta, know thyself.

Love all, embrace all, be kind to all,
Work is worship (serve all), serve the Lord in all.
Purify, concentrate, reflect, meditate,
Know the self through enquiry, "Who am I?"

Purify, concentrate, reflect, meditate, Serve, love, give and be dispassionate, Know Brahman, maya, samsara and 'I', Behold the goal of life, Hae Saumya nearby (Gopala Gopala .....)

25 DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Christmas is the great festival of Christendom. There is a spirit of joy everywhere. Men and women lay aside their jealousies and enmities for a while. They come a little nearer to each other -and to Christ.

Christ came and lived among men to awaken the Christ-consciousness within them. Christ should be born in each one of you - then alone you will understand spiritual life. Then alone you will try to live a perfect, divine life. Then alone you will realise the spirit of Christ, which is within each one of us.

The sacrament of baptism enables you to come one step nearer to this perfect life. The sacrament of confirmation enables you to come another step nearer to sharing his life, using his force and his love.

Now, you are a knight in Christ's service. When you partake of communion, you really partake of his very life. Thus the spirit of Christ in you is gradually being roused, and you are awakened to the higher life of Christ-consciousness.

Every day should be Christmas day for us. So bring the spirit of Christ into your daily life. Behold Christ in everything, in all beings. Cultivate sympathy and mercy for all beings. Expand your heart and embrace all. Greet the Christ, everywhere. Perform each day, for yourself, the Christ's mass. Remember that Christ is in the priest. Christ is in the saint and the sinner. Christ is in the dog and in the labourer. Christ is in all.

Every day is a fresh beginning. Spend it usefully. Beginning the day right will bring great success. The whole day will be well-lived. Begin the day at 4 a.m. Pray, meditate, do japa. Pray unto the Lord:
"Lord, lead me from the unreal to the real,
from darkness to light,
from hatred to love,
from impurity to purity,
from imperfection to perfection,
from disharmony to harmony,
from diversity to unity."

26 DECEMBER - MEDITATE ON THE LORD

Meditate on the Lord, the inner ruler, the indweller of your heart. The lotus of your heart will blossom; the sun of wisdom will shine. The darkness of the heart will end. The five kleshas (psychic sources of sorrow) will be annihilated. The three fires (internal, external and supernatural suffering) will be extinguished. Sins and samskaras (mental impressions) will be burnt. Vasanas (tendencies) and cravings will be fried.

Meditate on the eternal which is free from pain, from disease, from fear and delusion, which is all-filling, pure, far yet near, the birth place of the five elements, the final goal of yogins and sages, the source of mind, senses and vedas, the place where silence reigns supreme, where there is immortal bliss beyond thought, the supreme, glorious splendour where thought is dead, where there is neither noise nor fight.

Purity, humility and mercy are the rungs of the ladder to the supreme abode of my beloved. You may burn the ladder now - I will not come down any more. Rivers of honey run in this wonderful land and flowers do not fade at any time, I swim daily in the ocean of eternity. I drink the immortal nectar. Hunger and thirst torment me not. Exhaustion and fatigue trouble me not. There is no need of lamps and electric light - there is eternal sunshine. There is no fear of snakes and scorpions - this deathless realm makes everyone fearless.

When you have realised oneness, when you behold Brahman everywhere, can there be 'here' and 'there'? Can there be 'this' and 'that'? Can there be 'I' and 'you' and 'he'? Can there be one, two or three? One homogeneous, blissful essence alone exists. There is only one Brahman - the infinite. All dualities, differences and distinctions melt away. The seer and the seen become one. The meditator and the meditated fuse. The thinker and the thought blend. The knower and the knowable merge. It is the transcendental experience of wholeness, perfection, fullness, freedom and perennial joy.

Meditate on courage, humility, love, compassion, peace, bliss, serenity. First practise concentration on an object. Then concentrate on the idea of the object. Finally concentrate on the existence behind the idea.Meditate on completeness and spiritual perfection. To meditate is to go into oneself and open theheart, in silence, to the divine spirit. Meditate on the atman. You will see the light of truth, youwill understand the oneness of all life.

27 DECEMBER - KEY TO PERFECTION

Meditate on the atman; you will enjoy peace and bliss. The more you grow in aspiration and meditation the more God-like you grow, for in meditation is the light of the Lord. Meditate and charge your battery by contact with God. Dive deep into the chambers of your heart through profound and silent meditation and bring up the pearl of truth. Meditate and retire to your innermost centre. Abide now in perfect serenity and the peace that passeth all understanding.

Fear, distress, worry, temptation and despair will assail you during meditation. Repeat the Lord's name vigorously and sincerely - all will vanish. Meditate amidst noise, study amidst noise. Discipline and again discipline. There will be no tossing of the mind for you. You will have a strong unperturbed mind. If purity increases, the body becomes light and the mind becomes cheerful. One attains greater balance of mind and the power of concentration increases. You enter into deep meditation. If for one day you do not practise meditation, you will lose much; you will not be able to reach the original spiritual height the next day. Therefore always be regular in your meditation. Enquire, "Who am I?" Find the seer, find the knower.

Meditate on satchidananda atman, the inner ruler, the indweller. Meditate on Brahman as support, greatness, wisdom, bliss and existence. The light which never fails is the light of meditation. You experience samadhi (the vision of truth) through the light of meditation. Moksha (emancipation) is very near to him who is perfect is meditation. Connect your mind with the mind of God through meditation or yoga. Your life will become divine, your life will be transformed.

Meditation is the means; knowledge is the end. Meditation is the process; knowledge is the culmination. In meditation there is struggle, striving or effort. In knowledge there is no striving. So long as there is meditation, the meditator is only an aspirant. When meditation ceases and the goal is reached, the meditator becomes the knower of truth - all meditation and effort cease. He is a jivanmukta (liberated sage). When you try to behold a tree, there is effort in the beginning of perception. Later it becomes a continuous stream of consciousness of the tree. So is knowledge of Brahman.

28 DECEMBER - JIVANMUKTA

Ajivanmukta is a liberated sage. He is released even while living, He lives in the world, but he is not of the world. He always revels in the eternal bliss of the supreme self. He is the Lord himself, aGod on earth.

The jivanmukta or full-blown sage is full of pure love, compassion, mercy, exquisite gentleness and hidden power and strength. Love and lustre shine through his brilliant eyes.

The jivanmukta has not a bit of selfish interest in him and is absolutely free from worries, difficulties, troubles, tribulations and sorrows under all circumstances. Even when pains and afflictions attach themselves to his body, exhibit themselves on his face, his mind never writhes under them or their antithesis. He is not a slave of his moods; he is ever cheerful and peaceful. His higher excellences have been perfectly unfolded; all divine attributes are fully awakened in him. Every one of his weaknesses and limitations is burnt in toto. He shines in his own pristine glory, in his own essential nature of divine consciousness. He radiates peace and joy everywhere. The true greatness of a realised yogi is indescribable. His eyes are inspiring and impressive. His nature. is magnanimous, his touch purifying; his looks are merciful, gestures illuminating. He is omniscient; he has intuitive transcendental knowledge and clear insight into the very heart of all things and beings. You will experience a deep sense of peace and harmony, great elevation and inspiration, in his presence.

The jivanmukta or liberated sage is absolutely free from egoism, fear, doubt and grief. These are the four important signs that indicate that one has attained perfection. The liberated sage is perfectly content, has unruffled peace of mind, experiences deep abiding joy and bliss, possesses super-sensual spiritual knowledge and has the ability to clear any kind of doubt an aspirant may have. Doubts vanish when one remains in his company.

The jivanmukta does not even care for the wants of the body. He is not afraid of death and has no longing to live. Mother nature is his obedient and sweet nurse, attending upon him carefully. Bodily wants come by themselves. Nature arranges everything for him beforehand, this being her responsibility. Balanced mind, equal vision, indifference to the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, censure and praise, heat and cold, success and failure - these are the marks of a jivanmukta.

29 DECEMBER - THE SAGE'S VIEW OF THE WORLD

The man who stands up to his neck in water has a twofold experience. His head is exposed to the sun. He experiences both heat and cold. Such is the experience of a liberated sage. He has double consciousness. He enjoys the bliss of Brahman, but also has the experience of this world. He is like a man who knows two languages.

Just as the pot in which asafoetida or onion is kept emits a certain amount of smell even when it is cleaned several times, so also, a small trace of ignorance still remains in the mind of a sage. The jivanmukta (liberated sage) has a consciousness of the body in the form of an impression in the subconscious mind. That is the reason why he eats and drinks. Though the instinctive mind with low desires is destroyed, the pure mind does not perish in the liberated sage. How will he be able to engage himself in worldly activity without an instrument, namely, the mind?

The phenomenal universe does not vanish from the vision of the liberated sage. He sees the world as a dream within himself. Just as the mirage appears even after the illusory nature of the water is understood, so also, the world appears for a jivanmukta even after he has attained self-realisation, even after he has clearly understood the illusory nature of the world. But, just as the man who has understood the nature of the mirage will not run after the mirage for drinking water, so also, the sage who is liberated will not pursue sensual objects like the worldly-minded people though the world appears to him. That is the difference between a worldly man and a liberated sage.

The jivanmukta beholds theone reality or God everywhere and in all things. For him there is no distinction between a rogueand a saint, gold and stone, honour and dishonour. He actually feels that all is himself only thatsnakes, scorpions, tigers, bears and lions are as much part of himself as his own eyes, nose, ears,hands and feet. He is one with the flower, sun, ether, ocean, mountain and sky. He has cosmic visionand cosmic feelings.

30 DECEMBER - SAGE'S BEHAVIOUR

A liberated sage isnotawhimsicalman,neitherisheboundbytherulesofscriptureorsociety. And yet, he will notdeviatefromrighteousness.Allthathedoeswillbeinstrictaccordancewith the scriptures or sacredbooks.Hespontaneouslydoesonlywhatisgood.Anexpertdancernever makes a false step.Soisajivanmukta(liberatedsage)whenheworks.

The sage workswithouteffort,withoutagency,withoutegoism,desireandattachment.Like a child, his conductisneithergoodnorevil.Thesenseofrightandwrongwillbenaturalinhim independentlyofscripturalteachings.Hehasdestroyedallegoism,isaboveallkarma,andkarmas cannot touchhim.Hemay,fortheinstructionoftheworld,performworksorrefrainfrom forbidden acts.Thejivanmuktadoesnotcareforpubliccriticism.Hekeepsacoolmindevenwhen he is assaulted.Heblessesthosewhopersecutehim.Hebeholdsonlyhisownselfeverywhere. His markorcharacteristicisaninternalmentalstate.Itcannotbeperceivedordetectedbyothers. The LorduseshimforHisdivinework.

A knowerofBrahmanoraliberatedsageneednotbeagenius.Heneednotbeaneloquent speaker, orator,lecturerorprofessor.Butheiscalm,sereneandtranquil.Hissilenceissuperior eloquence.Hehasdivinewisdomandintuitiveknowledge.Inhispresence,alldoubtsarecleared.

Householdersmakeawrongjudgementindecidingthenatureofajivanmukta.Theytakeinto considerationonlytheexternalconditionsofajivanmukta.Eveneducatedpeoplemakemistakes in this regard.Hewillsometimesappearlikean'all-knower'.

He will sometimesappearlikeanignorantman.Heknowswhentoactlikeaknoweroftheself. Serve him with properfeelinganddevotion,withspiritualthirst;hewillimpartthehighest knowledge to you.Ifyouapproachhimwithabadmotive,hewillbehavelikeamadmanandyou will be deceived andgreatwillbeyourloss.

31 DECEMBER - A BEACON-LIGHT TO THE WORLD

The liberated sage, like unto holy waters, purifies others by mere sight, touch and the utterance of his name. Sometimes he remains unnoticed, while sometimes he becomes known to those who desire welfare. He eats food offered to him by pious devotees and burns up their past and future evils and impurities. A liberated sage or a saint is the ultimate source of knowledge of the soul. To keep company with a jivanmukta (liberated sage) for even a minute is much better than to rule a kingdom - his very presence is so thrilling and inspiring. Seek his company and evolve. Serve him with faith and devotion.

Ajivanmukta may give up his body in any place, at any time. Just as the falling leaves and fruits of atree will not affect the tree itself, so also, the shedding of the body will not affect the self which survives like the tree. His vital airs do not depart elsewhere for transmigration. They are absorbed inBrahman after the exhaustion of his destiny, the results of past actions that have already begun tobear fruit. He is freed from further births The jivanmukta is freed from the trammels of mind and matter. He is absolutely free, perfect, independent. He is absolutely free from hatred, lust, cares, worries and anxieties. Everybody surely desires this state of beatitude or final emancipation. It is the final goal of life, the end of all human aspirations.

The state of a jivanmukta is the be-all and end-all of existence. There is fullness in this state. All desires are burnt. It is a state of absolute and perfect satisfaction. There is no gain greater than this; no bliss greater than this; no wisdom greater than this.

There, at the summit of the hill of eternal bliss, you can see the sage or jivanmukta or a full-blown yogi. He has climbed the stupendous heights through intense and constant struggle. He did severe, rigorous spiritual practices. He did profound meditation. He spent sleepless nights. He kept long vigils during several halting stages. He persevered with patience and diligence. He surmounted many obstacles, conquered despair, gloom and depression. He is a beacon-light to the world now. Remember that he was also rotting in those days in the quagmire of births and deaths, like yourself. You can also ascend to that summit if only you will.

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